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A FRONTIER LIFE

BEING A
DESCRIPTION OF MY EXPERIENCE
ON THE FRONTIER THE FIRST
FORTY-TWO YEARS OF
MY LIFE

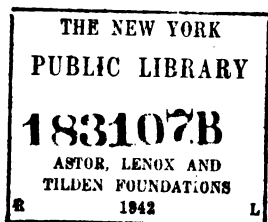
WITH
SKETCHES AND INCIDENTS OF HOMES IN
THE WEST; HUNTING BUFFALO AND
OTHER GAME; TROUBLE WITH THE
INDIANS, AND MY EARLY WORK
IN THE MINISTRY

BY
REV. CHARLES WESLEY WELLS
Of the Nebraska Conference



CINCINNATI:
PRESS OF JENNINGS & PYE

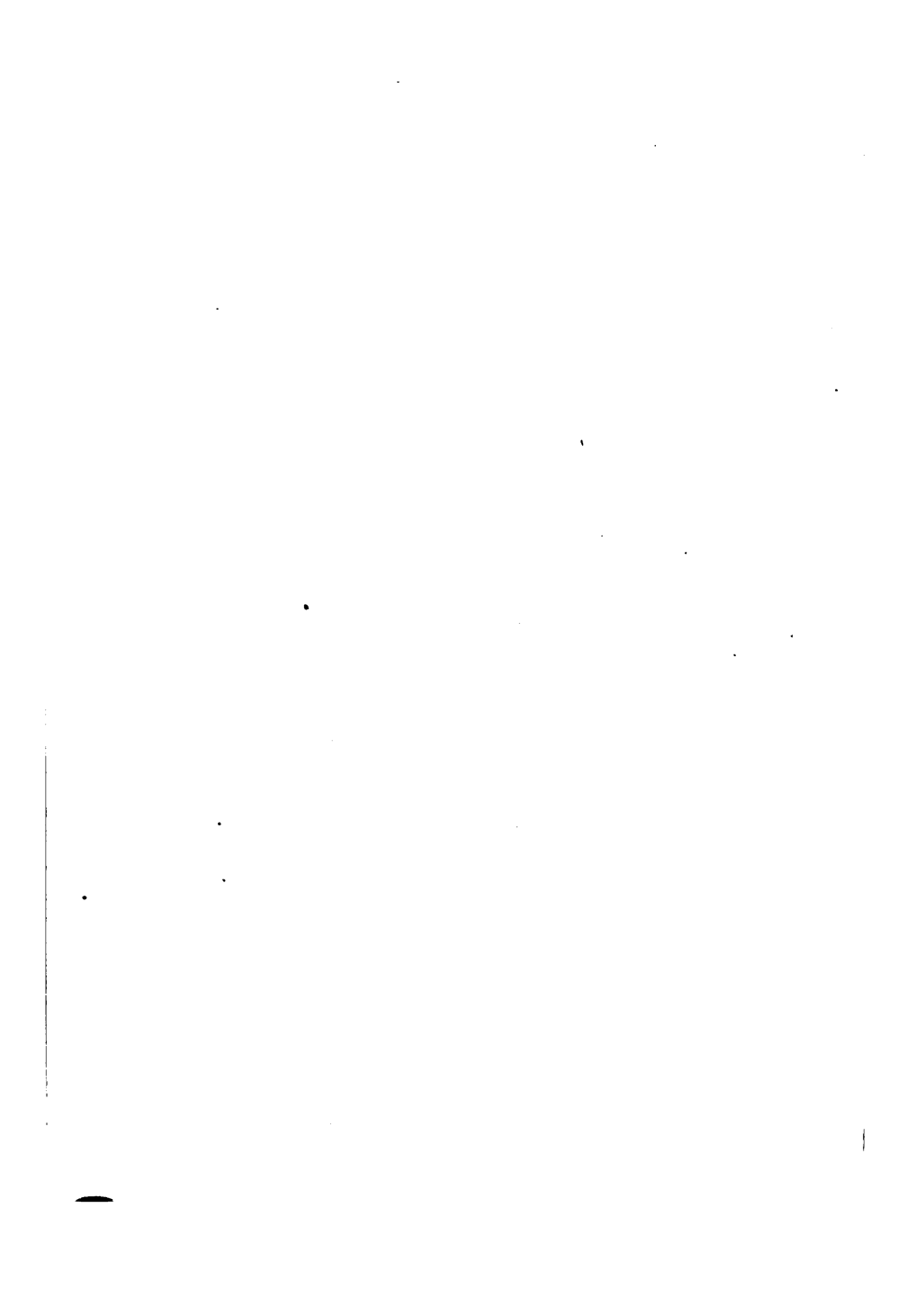
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C. W. WELLS,
ONG, NEBRASKA.
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TO
MY WIFE AND CHILDREN,
WHO, WITH ME,
HAVE BORNE THE TRIALS AND HARDSHIPS
OF A FRONTIER LIFE,
IS THIS BOOK DEDICATED.
THE AUTHOR.

H. M. Sender 25 April 42



INTRODUCTION

IN giving this little sketch to the public, I shall endeavor to give a brief description of the hardships and trials of frontier life. Speaking largely of my experience and trials with the Indians in different localities where I have lived, I shall also give some amusing accounts of hunting the buffalo, wolves, and other wild animals on the plains, including my trials and hardships in the ministry while laying the foundation for Methodism and righteousness in new and uncultivated fields.

In describing life and scenes among the wilds of the West, I shall strive in every particular to give the facts. Some of the material I have gathered is from other parties, who were eye-witnesses to what they have related to me.

In giving my own experience with the savages, I may make some mistakes, though I relate what I think to be correct.

The reader must be aware that, after the lapse of so many years, I may forget some particulars of the events I undertake to describe. So if any of my readers should discover an incorrect statement in this little record, they may know that I was misinformed or that my memory is at fault.

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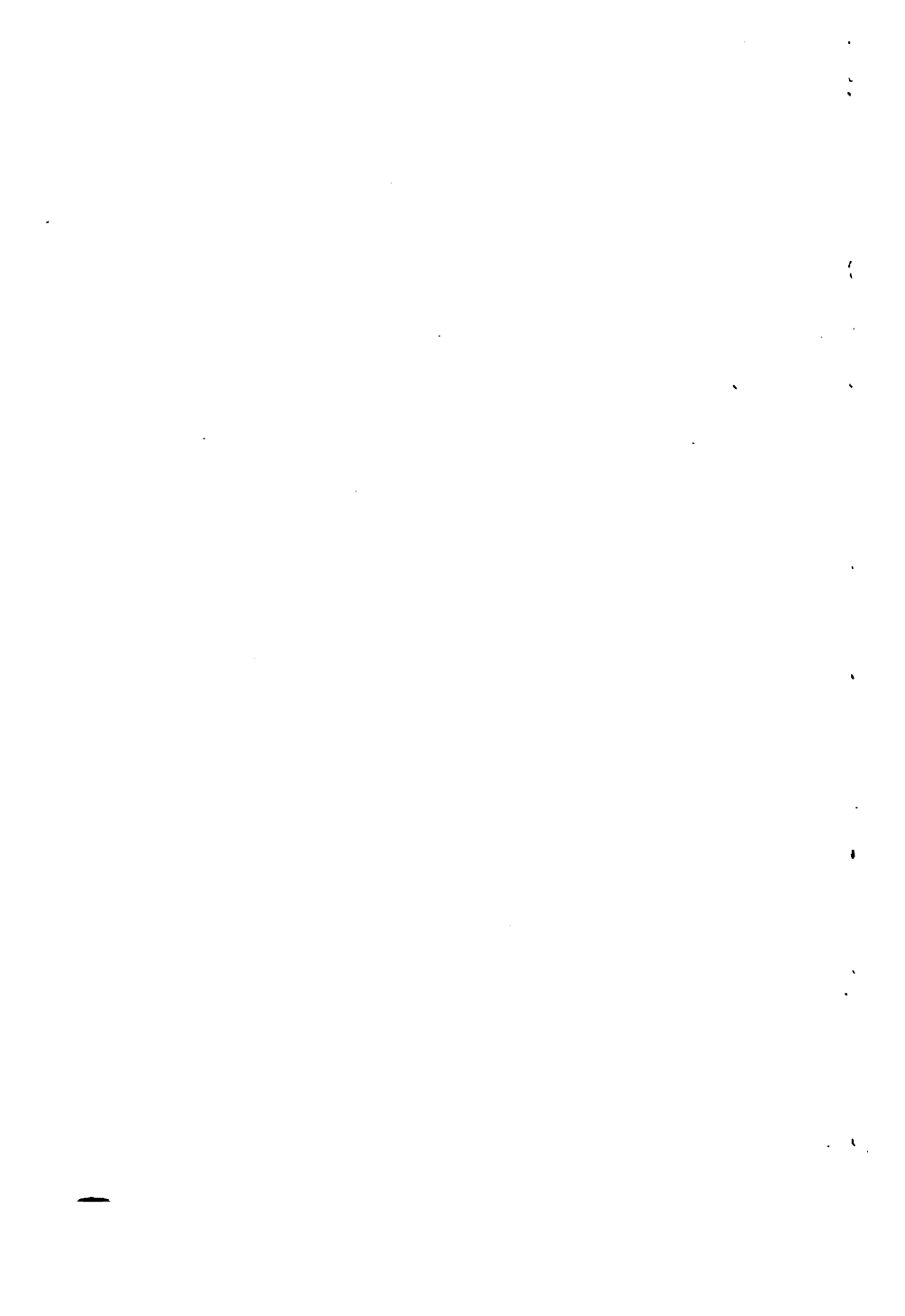
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A FRONTIER LIFE



CHAPTER I

MY BIRTH—MOVE TO ILLINOIS—MOVE BACK TO IOWA—EX-
PERIENCE IN THE BIG WOODS OF CEDAR—FRIGHTENED
BY INDIANS.

I WAS born on the 28th day of June, 1841, in Johnson County, Iowa, not far from Iowa City. At that time this part of Iowa was very new and sparsely settled. While I was yet a child my folks moved to Illinois, but remained there only a few years. In the year 1852 my father moved to the northern part of Iowa, and located in Chickasaw County, where he rented what was called a double log-house, which had been used as an Indian trading-post, and here we spent part of the winter. There being no school within reach of us, we boys spent much of our time in hunting through the woods and over the prairies for the wild deer, turkey, prairie-hen, and rabbit.

We lived about one mile from the woods, where we got fuel for the house, which was drawn on hand-sleds that we boys made with our own hands. Sometimes we were half a day making the trip; but there being some four or five

of us together, we brought plenty of wood to keep the fire going.

On coming to this part of the country, father laid claim on a piece of Government land in what was called the Big Woods of Cedar. Notwithstanding the exceedingly cold weather at that time, father concluded to move out to his claim in the woods. Loading the household goods and a part of the family upon a sled, we went, and camped in the timber until a house was built. Perhaps the distance we had to travel was not more than eight or nine miles, but because of the dense forest through which we had to pass, it took us all day to make the trip. There being no road leading to the place, it was necessary to make one, which was done by cutting away stumps, trees, and underbrush, then blazing the trees along the way, thereby marking the roadway through the woods. At that time, all through the woods, the snow was about two feet deep; but there had been a warm spell followed by a hard freeze, thus forming a crust sufficiently strong to bear up a team, so we could travel with ease on top of the snow.

Reaching our destination early in the even-

ing, we soon shoveled the snow from a place large enough to build a log fire and to spread our beds. There we were, miles from any house, with the thermometer below zero, and no shelter from the cold and storm, not even a tent to cover our heads.

Being neither frightened nor discouraged, we set to work cutting and drawing logs together for a fire, and in a short time had a rousing log-heap all aflame, warming the air for many feet around us. Wood enough having been procured to keep a good fire during the entire night, we thought we were comfortably settled. Supper over, the next thing was to prepare for sleeping. If the reader knows nothing of camp life, he is unable to understand how any one can sleep out of doors in the snow when the thermometer is twenty degrees below zero, without freezing to death.

Spreading our blankets on the cold ground, and making our beds on them, we turned in for the night. Lying with our feet close to the fire, we slept soundly and comfortably, with the exception of some one having occasionally to replenish the fire.

The greatest difficulty in living out of doors in such cold weather, by such a large fire, is the melting of the snow and the thawing of the ground around the fire making it muddy, and very unpleasant on that account. Waking early in the morning, after the first night's sleep in the woods and on the ground, we could hear reports as if a hundred pistols were being fired all around the camp. In that cold country, on a very cold night, the trees are so filled with frost and frozen so hard, that all through the night and until late in the morning they can be heard throughout the forest snapping with a sound like the discharge of so many pistols. Such was the first morning of our camping in this place. Imagine the thermometer twenty-five degrees below zero, hundreds of trees snapping around you, as if they would split from one end to the other and fall to pieces because of the intensity of the cold; at the same time snow two feet deep in the woods, and frozen sufficiently to bear the weight of a large yoke of oxen; the cold winds from the north whistling and bellowing through the swaying branches of the trees; and imagine a family set down in the midst of these surroundings, and

you have some idea of our camp life in the Big Woods of Cedar.

Early in the morning of the first day in the woods could be heard, for miles away, the clear ringing of our axes as we sent the sharp steel to the frozen trunks of the trees that were being felled for the erection of a house. He who has been brought up altogether in a prairie country knows nothing of the charm there is in the distant sound of a falling tree, and the echo of the woodman's ax mingling with the clarion notes of the woodpecker, pecking on the dry trunk of a hollow tree. Such to the woodman is music, and wonderfully charming to his ear. O how my thoughts go back to the place where we used to fell the trees, and convert them into saw-logs, rails, or cord-wood! The boy who has been raised exclusively in a prairie country knows nothing of the amount of labor there is in a timbered country. Iowa is not altogether a timbered country, yet living in some of those heavy bodies of timber is like living in a country that is exclusively timbered.

All hands working early and late, enough logs were soon brought together for a house.

As they were not hewed, but left in their natural form, they were ready to go into the body of the house as soon as on the ground. The raising and covering of the house was the next thing to be done. As there were three or four men and as many boys at work on it, it was soon raised to a sufficient height, and the roof put on. Then came the chinking and daubing, which was no small part of the work on a house of this kind.

Perhaps the reader would like to have me explain what chinking and daubing is. Well, after the logs are laid, forming the body of the building, there are cracks or spaces left between the logs, through which a cat or small dog might be thrown. These cracks must be filled in order to complete the body of the house. Pieces of wood are split small enough, and tightly driven into these cracks, and wedged there with small wooden wedges to hold them to their places. This we call chinking. After the chinking is done, still there are small cracks and holes to be filled, and as there is no lime to be had, clay or the natural soil is taken and made into mortar, and, with a wooden trowel, daubed into the cracks, both outside and inside the building,

closing all the small cracks, thus making a complete shelter from the wind and storm, and a tolerably comfortable house. This we call daubing the house.

I must not pass without giving a sketch of the great, huge fireplace in our new house. I think it must have been large enough to take in logs at least eight feet in length, and with sufficient capacity to receive a half cord of wood. The back part of the fireplace was composed of very stiff mortar, made of clay and pounded up against the logs of the building until a complete wall was formed between the fire and the logs of the house. The chimney was made of sticks split very thin and narrow, something like the common lath, and laid up in the same kind of mortar used for the walls of the building. When I describe the roof and floor of the house, you can have some idea of our home in the woods. Heavy poles, called ridge-poles, were laid on top of the body of the house in such a way as to form the shape of the roof, and for the support of the roof-boards (shakes), which were laid loosely on the poles. The same number of similar poles were laid on the roof-boards to hold

them in place. These poles were called weights, and were kept on the roof, at a proper distance apart, by braces from one to the other. The reader may ask why we did not nail the roof-boards to their places. For the very best of reasons: we had no such luxuries as nails, nor money to buy them. I presume that, when the building was completed, there were not a dozen nails in the house. The auger and hardwood pins were substituted for them. Nor were nails used in making either the doors or the floor. What need had we of nails or lime, when nature provided wood so liberally, out of which pins could be made for such purposes, with plenty of black soil in place of lime?

I will now give a sketch of the wonderful bedstead and chairs which were made for this new house, and its history is complete. So far as I can remember, a pole running the full length of the house, inside, and fastened six feet from the side, composed the framework of the bedstead, making a frame eighteen feet long, on which beds were made across the house, with the heads turned towards the wall, and ample

room for a family of twelve. The seats were principally benches made of logs, split and hewed for this purpose.

Here, in the Big Woods, we spent the winter in hunting and rambling through the forest, spending most of our time at play.

Being born in a new country, we either lived among the Red Men, or not far from them; so most of our early days were spent in almost constant dread of them. At one place where we lived, while we children were yet small, and father away from home, leaving all the care of the family with mother until his return, frightful news came that the Indians were coming on the warpath, thirty thousand strong, murdering the settlers and destroying all the property in the country through which they were passing. You may imagine how frightened we were, when such a dreadful rumor reached our ears. There we were, miles from neighbors, father from home, and mother alone, with a houseful of children to look after. In such a situation, our chances for escape with our lives were exceedingly doubtful. Of course we were frightened, and could

only expect to be murdered by the savages. That the report might be false was our only hope of seeing another day. Darkness, with its gloom, came on, only adding to our horrible situation, when a message came informing us that the neighbors had, most of them, gone, or were going, to fly for their lives that night, leaving us alone, as we thought, in the cruel hands of the bloodthirsty fiends. Mother gathered us into the house, talked to us encouragingly, as only a mother can under such trying circumstances, told us to go to bed and sleep, and if the Indians should come she would awaken us. Confiding in a mother's care, we soon forgot our trouble, and were quietly resting in dream-land while she spent the long, dark, and awful hours in looking and listening for the first appearance of the expected enemy. In this condition, and with such surroundings, mother watched over her sleeping children, guarding them from coming danger as best she could. The long and lonely hours of night were spent in dipping tallow-candles for pastime, thereby diverting her mind from the awful situation, and

giving bodily exercise to keep her awake. Morning came, light and fair, bringing with it the glad news that the Indians were not coming to our part of the country.

None but those who have passed through such awful scenes can comprehend the joy there was in our home when we learned that we were out of danger; for there is a dread and even a horror at the very thought of being murdered by the Indians, that is unsurpassed by almost any other fear.

We call to mind another time when we were woefully frightened by a similar report. A rumor was sent broadcast through the surrounding country that the wild men were coming, murdering all who chanced to fall in their path. Within a few hours from the time the news first reached us, the entire community were on the move, seeking shelter from the scalping-knife and tomahawk, leaving everything, except the team that carried them away, in possession of the savages. After two or three days from home, we learned that the report had no foundation. Notwithstanding all this, we were as badly fright-

ened as though the reports were true. A false alarm frightens just as much as a true report, when we are ignorant of the facts.

Such exciting times belong to the frontier life. Time after time we were made uneasy by false alarms, as well as by those that were real.

CHAPTER II

MOVE TO KANSAS—HUNTING THE BUFFALO—OUR HOME ON
THE KANSAS PLAINS—DESCRIPTION OF THE BUFFALO
AND OTHER ANIMALS—FATHER CHASED BY INDIANS—
OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST.

IN the year 1860 we left the thinly-settled part of Iowa, and moved to a newer country in Western Kansas, where we obtained much of our supplies for the table from the plains, which abounded with buffaloes, antelopes, and wolves. The people in this part of Kansas depended as much (or more) on hunting the buffalo for a living as on the grain they raised.

In the fall of the year the settlers went to the buffalo range, and camped near some stream or pool of water, where the animals often came to slake their thirst, and where the hunter concealed himself behind some bank, or in some low place, where the unsuspecting beast must come for water. In this way the hunter frequently killed four or five before they could get out of range of his trusty rifle.

The reader will want to know of the quality of the flesh of the wild ox. In flavor it is as good as or better than that of the domestic ox, though much coarser-grained. If the buffalo were fed on grain until fat, I think the meat would be superior to that of our domestic cattle. The flesh from a good fat buffalo is sweet and palatable, especially when broiled by a camp-fire.

I must not pass here without telling the reader how we prepared our meat for keeping while so far from home, as we were sometimes while on the plains. There were two ways of doing this. When the weather was the least bit damp, the flesh was all cut from the bones, and sliced into thin pieces, then dipped into boiling brine prepared for that purpose. It was then put on to a scaffold, made by driving four forked sticks into the ground, on which other sticks were laid, until a complete scaffold was formed, on which all the flesh from a large buffalo could be placed over a fire for drying. A slow fire was kept under it until it was sufficiently cured to keep from spoiling; all of which could be done in less than a day's time. When

the weather was warm and dry, as it usually is in this country, the meat was prepared as above described, but with no fire under it, letting it dry in the sun and wind. When the sun shone brightly, and the hot winds blew from the southwest, as they often do on those sandy plains, meat could be cured in seven or eight hours, and would keep all summer in a dry place. Those who have never eaten of the fresh, fat meat of a buffalo know nothing of its sweetness, and how delicious it is. When we were in camp on the buffalo range, and desired an extra good dish, the ribs were taken from a fat young cow, and turned up broadside before a hot fire until one side was thoroughly roasted; then the other side was treated the same way; after which it was ready for the hunter's table, which consisted of a wagon-seat or the crossed legs of the hunter.

Besides the buffalo which went far towards supplying the larder, there were many antelopes on the plains of Kansas, the flesh of which greatly helped in furnishing food for the family. By the hunters the flesh of the antelope was considered the very best wild meat the country afforded. The flesh is of a fine quality, and, when

fat, is far superior to that of the sheep for flavor. The hide of the antelope was used for various purposes. When well tanned it was used for making pants, and sometimes the best and finest qualities were good for shirting, and thought to be excellent wear for the hunter. There are many species of the antelope, but the American is the one to which we refer.

The habits of the antelope are peculiar. In the fall of the year they gather in great flocks, like sheep, for the purpose of migrating south, where they find food for the winter. In the spring of the year, just as the grass is clothing the prairie with green, they return to the Northern States, where they spend the summer and rear their young. On traveling south in the fall they go in herds; but on their return in the spring they seem to come one at a time, being scattered in every direction. Sometimes, however, two or three can be seen in company. The antelope is of a very wild nature, and usually feeds on the high rolling prairie, where he can easily discover an approaching enemy, sometimes running at the sight of a man though miles away, while at other times it will stand and gaze

at the hunter until shot down. Being of a very inquisitive nature, on seeing an object which it does not recognize, it will approach closer and closer, circle round and round, stepping softly, seemingly determined to know what the object is before it leaves the place. Many times, in this way, it is made an easy prey to the hunter. I have seen these animals in the distance coming toward me, and lain down flat to the ground until they came within a few paces of where I was lying, and stand until shot down. At other times I have attracted their attention and drawn them to me by throwing myself on the ground, and waving a handkerchief in the air above my head.

One of the most successful ways to get a shot at the antelope is, when it is seen in the distance, for one hunter to conceal himself, and then for another to walk away from the one concealed, leaving him in ambush between himself and the game, at the same time waving a handkerchief so the animal can see it. This draws it towards him until within gunshot of the man lying in ambush, who finds it an easy prey.

At certain times of the year antelopes are

much wilder than at other seasons. In the spring, when returning to the north, they are more easily decoyed and killed than in the fall. As they return in the spring they are usually found with but one in a place, and seem to be hunting for their mates. Hence, when they see an object, and not knowing what it is, they make sure it is not an antelope before leaving. At such times, if the hunter keeps himself well concealed, the game will come within a few paces of him before it will take fright and run.

In the fall of the year the flesh of the antelope is far better than at any other season, and is at that time the most difficult to obtain. Early in the fall their young are about half grown, and are so fleet that, when frightened, they will distance the swiftest greyhound in the chase. At this time the old ones seem to be training their young to keep away from danger. There are but few, if any, animals that can skip over the prairie as swiftly as the antelope of America.

Notwithstanding the wild nature of the American antelope, it may be tamed so as to follow its master like a pet lamb, and, if turned loose, will not, like most other wild animals, go

back to a wild state, unless turned loose among the wild ones, away from its master. I have seen them running about the house and yard, being permitted to go where they liked, but were sure not to go far from home.

I must not pass without giving the reader a sketch of our home on the Kansas plains. The house was of rough logs, and made about the same as those in Iowa, which are described in a former chapter, with the exception of the roof and chimney. The roof of the former was of bark and boards; the latter was of poles, straw, and dirt. The chimney of the former was made of sticks and mud; the latter of stones and mud.

In the summer of 1861 father had a piece of ground plowed, on which he planted sod-corn and some melons. I think five acres of sod-corn was all the crop we had to depend upon for bread. A good crop on such a small piece of ground would have been a scanty supply for such a large family. That season, the weather being dry, the hot winds from the southwest again burned up all the crops in the country. Finding some work to do for others helped us out a little; but our main dependence for sup-

port was wild game, the principal of which was the bison, or American buffalo. The antelope and jack-rabbit often afforded us a good square meal, but the buffalo was our mainstay for meat and bread, and was sometimes turned into clothing. Part of the flesh was eaten, and part exchanged for bread or clothing. Sometimes overcoats were made of the hides, and sometimes they were sold and sent back East, though bringing only a small price.

All in the country were hunters, many times the women going with a hunting party to the buffalo range. Sometimes my own mother took part in the hunt after the wild American ox.

I shall never forget my first trip to the buffalo-ground. Early one beautiful morning in the fall of 1861 some six or eight of us started in quest of the buffalo. After traveling several miles, and, as I thought, beyond all settlement, I would run on ahead of the company and look for game. Thus I traveled on perhaps a mile in advance of the teams, when, down on the banks of a creek near a clump of trees, I saw four buffaloes feeding on the grass. On seeing the game I became wonderfully excited, and

thought, "Now, I will say nothing to the other boys, but hasten on and have one killed before the company knows anything about it." Being fleet of foot, I left the wagons in the distance, and, running like a man for life, soon came close to the game. Keeping the trees between me and the buffaloes, I crept softly along until reaching the creek, and, there being no water in it, I thought, "Now I have them; for they are near the bank where I can approach them under cover." While I could hear my own heart throbbing with excitement, I went crawling along, occasionally looking up over the bank to see where they were. As I crept along with such expectations, my feelings were almost indescribable. I thought, "How the men will be surprised when they come up, and find that I, who have never been on the buffalo range, and have never seen a wild buffalo, and have been looked upon as a 'tenderfoot,' have killed the first one on this trip!" Besides all this, we had not yet reached the place where the old hunters expected to find game larger than an antelope. Taking these things into consideration, I was exceedingly anxious to make sure work. So, creeping

along until reaching the bank not far from where they were leisurely grazing in the valley, getting my gun all ready for a fatal shot, and poking it up over the bank to shoot—behold! one of them had a cow-bell! I hesitated, and, on looking around, saw a farm-house but a short distance from where the animals were feeding!

The reader can guess how quickly my feathers fell on seeing how near I had come to shooting a farmer's tame buffalo, just within a few rods of his dooryard. Throwing the gun on my shoulder, I slowly walked back to the road, considerably chagrined, but congratulating myself on not getting into trouble. Sitting down, I waited until the teams came up, but was careful to say nothing about my adventure. Having had my fun all alone, I would keep my disappointment to myself, and but few, if any, of that company ever knew of my blunder.

After about three days' travel, we reached the buffalo range, where there were thousands feeding on the prairie-grass, and all eyes were strained in looking off in the distance at the coveted game. At some places on the Kansas plains the country is so level that a herd of buffaloes

may be seen nearly ten miles away, thus giving the hunter a chance to take advantage of the unsuspecting animals.

Late in the afternoon of the third day after leaving home, we saw buffaloes in the distance, when a plan of operation was agreed upon, that we might capture at least one before night. The wagons were driven so as to head off the creatures from going where they wished, some of the hunters keeping close to the teams, while others were on either side and in front of them. The animals soon saw they were being cut off from the course they were traveling, and, making a bold dash, attempted to run in front of the teams, when father shot one through the lungs, which soon brought him to the ground. This prepared us for a grand feast that night. All hands taking hold, the game was soon dressed and in the wagon, and we were away to camp for the night.

One who has never camped on the buffalo range knows nothing of the strange feelings that come over one who sleeps, or tries to sleep, there for the first time. As soon as the mantle of darkness is thrown over the land, the wolves

come forth from their hiding-places to seek their prey, and about the time the hunter lies down for the night's sleep they begin their revelry by gathering all around the camp, and setting up a coarse, hideous howl, which sounds far away, though it is very near the camp. These wolves which infest the buffalo range are called the large gray wolf, being larger than a common mastiff, and, when hungry, often attack young buffaloes, and have been known to kill horses and mules. The howl of the gray wolf sounds more like the howl of a large dog than any thing else to which I can liken it. With the howling of the wolves, and the bellowing and tramping of the thousands of buffaloes around the unprotected camp, the inexperienced hunter feels that he is in neither a pleasant nor a safe place for sleeping. Many times have I lain down in the night, and heard in the distance the tramp of frightened buffaloes, sounding like distant thunder, and making the very earth tremble where we lay. Never shall I forget the dreadful noise made by the stampeding of thousands of them as, in wild fury, they rushed onward, demolishing everything that lay in their path, turning their course

for no obstacle, bounding across the ditches with their heavy tread, scaling the hills, leaping over banks ten feet high, and plunging into the river, whether the water was shallow or deep. At such times as this, if the hunter's camp should be in their pathway, he stands a good chance to be tramped to death by them while passing in their mad career. When frightened, these wild beasts of the plains are a dangerous foe to meet, especially when in large herds. Large freight-trains while crossing the plains have been completely destroyed by frightened herds of buffalo, which ran into them, killing the teams, breaking the wagons to pieces, and sometimes killing the driver. This I only know by hearsay. Notwithstanding all this, the buffalo is not as vicious an animal as many think.

Let us now speak of the nature and habits of this native ox of the American plains. The American buffalo is so called by the American people; but naturalists inform us that it is not buffalo, but properly bison. "The American bison is very similar to the European. In general it is rather smaller, but not always, and it is said sometimes to attain to a weight of two

thousand pounds. Its limbs, tail, and horns are shorter. The front parts of the American bison are very strong and heavy, having a rough and shaggy appearance—more so in summer than in winter.”

The wolf is unable to contend with the bison; but many wolves often hang around the herds to devour the calves. The only American animal that is singly capable of overcoming the bison is the grizzly bear. The size and strength of the animal makes it probable that, if domesticated, it would be of great use. This American bison, or buffalo, as I shall call it, is of a very wild nature, and keeps as far from settlements as possible, though, when pinched with hunger, he will venture far into danger. He has been driven almost from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and must soon become a thing of the past. The old are very strongly attached to the young, and many times, when the calf is shot down, the mother will stand by her offspring until she, too, is killed by its side.

Buffaloes usually go in great herds. I think I am not overestimating when I say that I have seen more than a hundred thousand in one herd.

I have ridden on horseback a full half day at a time, with them all around me, both near and as far away as eye could see over the prairies in every direction. Though the buffalo is vicious when wounded, or when surrounded by an enemy, so that he has no chance to run for his life, yet it is a mistake to think he is inclined to attack a man whenever the opportunity is afforded. If not cornered, or wounded, so that he can not run, he will always flee from man, like most other wild animals; but when cornered, or wounded, so that he can not escape for his life, he becomes a formidable foe, and has been known to kill both horse and rider.

While we were yet in Kansas, the Indians of that section went on their usual summer hunt. As they were pursuing the buffaloes on their ponies, shooting arrows into them as they ran, one unfortunate fellow, riding close beside a buffalo, was seen by the animal, who wheeled, and met him, almost instantly killing both horse and rider. The male is more likely to fight than the female; but when a cow makes a charge for fight, she will follow it up much longer than the male.

Whether the saying be true that when a

woman undertakes to injure an enemy, she is more determined and sticks to her purpose longer than a man, I know not; but I do know that it is the case with the more tender sex of the buffalo race, for I have had experience with them. Many times have we followed the wounded buffalo on horseback until he would go no farther, but would turn upon us, making us put whip to the horse to keep away from the horns of the infuriated and powerful beast. Under such circumstances I think we could get more speed out of our horse than when pursuing the animals; at least we were more anxious that the horse should make better time.

As previously stated, the buffalo has wonderful strength, and grows to be of great size. I have seen them killed that would measure nearly six feet from the top of the hump over the shoulder to the lower part of the brisket; and when the hide was stretched to its utmost capacity, it was large enough to cover three beds of common width.

Buffaloes are generally on the march when not sleeping, never staying long in one place. Unlike most other animals, they travel against

the wind, no difference how bad the storm. In cold weather and in warm it is the same; they always face the wind. The drifting snowstorm, which drives our domesticated animals before it, is invariably faced by the bovine of the plains. There seem to be two reasons for this. The first is: Being sagacious animals, they are usually on the lookout for danger when not sleeping, and, having a sharp, keen scent, they are guarded from surprise by an approaching enemy in front. The second reason seems to be this: On the forehead and halfway back on the body they are covered with a heavy coat of wool or hair, while their hinder parts are naked and exposed to the weather; and so they are warmer with their faces toward the storm. They not only travel toward the storm, but they lie down facing it. The great mass of hair on the forehead of the male is wonderful to behold, being from ten to twenty inches long, and so thickly matted over the pate, that a common rifle-ball can not pass through it. Perhaps the reader has heard that the skull of the buffalo is so thick and hard that a ball from the keenest rifle will not penetrate it. This is a false impression; notwithstanding, it is a fact

that a ball from a common rifle will not penetrate the forehead of the male; but it is because of the great mat of hair on it, which is always filled with sand and dirt.

Before going on to the buffalo range, I heard old hunters say that they could not kill one by shooting it in the forehead. Doubting the truthfulness of this statement, I determined at the first opportunity to give it a trial. A short time after reaching the range I had a chance to try it. One of my brothers and I wounded one so that he could not run away, nor run us away, and we tried shooting him in the forehead. Stepping up within a few paces of his head, we fired. At the crack of the gun we saw the dust fly from his head, which he slightly moved to one side as though nothing had happened. I have tried the same, time after time, but was unable to penetrate the head through that mat of wool and sand. The experienced hunter, to make sure of his game, will aim to penetrate the lower part of the body just behind the shoulder, or shoot the creature in the small of the back. By aiming at the former place the ball is likely to reach the heart; at the latter place the backbone may be

broken, which will always secure the game. Sometimes, when the buffalo is wounded, and then aggravated until he is completely enraged, it seems almost impossible to kill him, though he is shot many times. I call to mind an experience we had in killing an old fellow after wounding him. A brother and I were out hunting when we saw several buffaloes together. Creeping up close enough, as we thought, to bring one down, we both fired at the one nearest, and broke one of his hind legs. His hind leg being broken, we felt sure of capturing him; but if allowed to walk away, he would walk many miles before either stopping to eat or lie down. The only sure way to capture him, then, was to set him to running, as he would go but a short distance when his well leg would give way and let him to the ground. Reloading our guns as quickly as possible, we gave chase. After following him perhaps a half mile, his leg could support him no longer, and down he went. Walking up within a reasonable distance of the wounded and angry beast we fired into him again, both balls entering his body, seemingly with but little effect, for he arose to his feet and started off as before.

Again we gave chase, and drove him until he fell, when another charge was put into him, which fastened him to the ground, but failed to kill him. Standing within a few feet of him, we sent eight or ten balls as near his heart as we could, and yet he lived. Being now two miles from camp, and the shades of night coming upon us, we left the buffalo, and went for the team to take our game to camp, thinking that he would certainly be dead by the time we could return. On returning to dress our game, we found him still alive and lying on his side in a natural position. Again we tried shooting, but failed to kill him in that way. He was so weak that we ventured to take him by the horns, pull him over, and cut his throat, which brought death in a short time.

It is wonderful how an animal will sometimes cling to life when shot in so many places, and any one of the wounds would finally cause its death. When a hunter breaks the hind leg of a buffalo, he feels quite sure of getting him; for with one hind leg broken, he can run but a short distance, when he gives out and falls. Not so when one of the front legs is broken. He is so strong in

the shoulders and front legs that he can run for many miles thus injured, and often outruns the hunter and escapes on three legs. Sometimes we hunted the buffalo in a way called by the hunters still hunting; that is, by creeping upon them under cover of banks of earth, weeds, brush, or prairie-grass. Another mode of still hunting was to find a herd and learn the direction it was traveling, then lie in ambush, and take it by surprise, though this is difficult because, as previously stated, the herd usually travels against the wind, and will scent you. The best time to ambush these animals is while they are going for water, at which time they can not always face the wind. Another way of hunting them is on horseback. The hunter first finds their whereabouts, then rides as close to them as he can under cover, and, making a charge, goes flying down upon them, shooting them as they run. This is the Indian's favorite mode. But for the white man it is not equal to still hunting, as it drives the game so far from camp. Sometimes, when thus frightened, they will run eight or ten miles before stopping.

To engage in the buffalo chase on horseback

is wonderfully exciting to the sportsman, but is attended with great danger to both horse and rider. Many times have I taken part in this exciting and dangerous chase after the wild ox of the American plains, running into a herd of probably more than five thousand, and separating them in every direction.

On a beautiful summer day, while some of my brothers and I were on the plains among the buffaloes, we decided to capture a young one by rushing upon it with our horses. Finding a large herd feeding on the grass, a small one was selected, and we gave chase. The herd ran helter-skelter over the hills and valleys, scattering in every direction. Separating from the herd the one we had selected, it was soon overtaken. Riding alongside of the animal, we shot it with our revolvers, but only wounded it enough to make it fight for life. While we were riding around to get another broadside shot, it made a vicious lunge at my horse, aiming to strike him in the side, but missed its aim and struck under him. Being small and much weakened from the wound, it was unable to do any harm, and only made sport for us.

We will give the reason why buffaloes are so dangerous and destructive to wagons, tents, or anything in their path, while running. There is no such danger where only a few are together. As has been stated, buffaloes go in large herds, and when they are frightened they all run in the same direction. Seeming to think that the enemy is in their rear, the hind ones crowd upon those in front, and should the leaders come to an object which they can not shun, they are pressed upon it by the mighty herd behind them. In their mad flight they have no power to stop, or even turn from their course. Should those in front attempt to stop, or even turn aside, they would be gored by those behind, unable to see the danger in front. They would not only be gored, but would probably be knocked down and trampled to death by the oncoming thousands.

The buffalo may be tamed so as to become quite docile; but as yet it has not proved profitable to its keeper.

Besides buffaloes, wolves, and antelopes on the Kansas plains, there were jack-rabbits, snakes, prairie-dogs, and owls.

The prairie-dog is a very interesting species

of marmot. It is about the size of a timber squirrel, and has soft, reddish fur, each hair being red, with a white tip. The name prairie-dog seems to have been given to it from its frequent utterance of a sound somewhat like the bark of a puppy. It seems that a more correct name would be barking marmot. The prairie-dog does not inhabit the richly grass-covered prairie, where buffaloes abound, but seeks those places which, for want of water, exhibit a comparatively scanty supply of vegetation. Here they are to be found in vast numbers, being gregarious in their habits. Burrowing in the ground, they throw up mounds of earth, on the summits of which the little creatures often sit as if on guard. The whole extent of a great level prairie is often covered with these little hillocks. As soon as the hand is raised to a weapon or missile, they pop into their holes with amazing rapidity, then turn round, come out, and bark at the intruder.

Still more interesting is the frequent association of the prairie-dog with the burrowing owl and the rattlesnake in the same burrow; an association which has been variously described as one of strange friendship among creatures of

the most opposite characters, as the owl and the rattlesnake are supposed to prey upon the prairie-dog and its young. But so far as the owl is concerned, this is rendered very doubtful, from the fact that it probably finds the burrows of the marmot its only convenient retreat, and their inhabitants harmless neighbors. The rattlesnakes referred to are large, venomous reptiles, much dreaded by all buffalo-hunters. These snakes are frequently found in the prairie-dog holes. Whether occupied by the dogs I know not, but am inclined to doubt, though most hunters say they are.

The jack-rabbit is another object of interest as well as curiosity, and affords the hunter many a good dinner. The jack-rabbit is as fleet as the wind; so swift, indeed, that but few hounds can overtake it in the chase. The Western sportsman glories in chasing the long-eared hare of the plains. By some the flesh of the jack-rabbit is considered an excellent food, though others think it inferior to the common rabbit.

Having given you a brief sketch of some of the animals found on the plains, I will now return to our hunting expedition. After feasting

on the game brought down by my father's sure aim and trusty rifle, on coming to the buffalo range, as previously stated, we slept for the first time on the wild plains of Kansas, among the wolves and frightened buffaloes. The next day we moved and pitched camp in a more convenient place for drying the meat. When the shades of night came again, we had three more buffaloes killed and drawn to camp. If we wished to make sure of the game killed during the day, it was drawn to camp before night; for the wolves were always following the buffaloes, and when one was wounded, they would follow him until he died or got well. If a buffalo was killed and left out over night, the wolves would devour it before morning.

We remained on the hunting-ground about two weeks, during which time we killed enough game, when the flesh was taken from the bones, to fill two wagon-beds of the clean meat alone. With this we returned home, fully satisfied with our hunt.

Early in the spring of 1861 we made another trip to the range, taking two wagons with which

to bring back our summer's supply of meat. This time we found the buffaloes in great herds, and soon returned loaded with the flesh and hides of this wild ox.

The hides of the buffaloes were mostly used for robes. When taken in the fall or forepart of winter the fur is long and thick, and makes excellent robes or overcoats. One time, while out among the buffaloes, I killed a young male, took off his coat with my own knife, took it home, tanned it, and made a coat of it for myself—the first overcoat I ever owned. We learned of the Indians how to cut the green hides into narrow strips for lariat ropes, which, by the people of this country, were used instead of grass ropes. It is a shame how those animals were killed, and left on the ground to waste! Thousands of them were killed just for the fun of shooting them. Some hunters would kill them for the meat and leave the hide, and some would kill them for the hide and leave the meat, while others killed them for the tongue, and left the rest to be devoured by the wolves or rot on the ground. I have known men to spend all their

time in killing them for the tongue alone, which they shipped east for fifty cents apiece, making considerable money.

During the summer season three of us made another trip to the buffalo range alone. This time we took two yoke of oxen to one wagon, intending to bring back a good supply of meat. After our first day's drive, we camped for the night. When not on the buffalo ground our teams could be turned loose, and would stay with us until morning; but when on the range we had to keep them on ropes, for they would stay nowhere when loose. This night we were not far from the settlement, so they were all turned loose to feed on the grass. On awaking the next morning our oxen were not to be seen, and we soon discovered that they had taken the trail for home. It fell to my brother Richard's lot to follow and bring them back. While waiting his return, I took my gun and went in search of antelopes. After going a short distance I saw an old dam and her young feeding on the grass in a low place, which afforded a good chance for a shot. Creeping close to them, I fired and brought down the old one. How cruel it now

seems to shoot down an old dame, and leave the young to provide for itself, or to kill the young by the side of its mother! The game was soon dressed, and I went marching to camp with it on my shoulder. If the reader has ever undertaken to carry a hundred-pound pig the distance of a mile, he knows something of my feelings on reaching the camp. About night, Richard returned with the oxen, and the next morning we moved towards the hunting-ground. We traveled several days before finding buffaloes, and began to despair of finding any at all.

Traveling in a southwesterly direction, we crossed the Arkansas River, and came into a country wonderful to behold, where no vegetation grew, excepting occasionally a kind of shrub that would grow in the sand. We traveled in this section of country until nothing but an ocean of sand could be seen in any direction, the banks of sand appearing like so many waves of the sea. One evening we camped on this sandy plain, and as yet had found no buffalo. Rising early the next morning, we saw two buffaloes coming toward the camp; but, seeing us, they turned and ran. Brother and I gave them a chase through

the sand, came upon them, and brought them to the ground. Soon the teams were with us, and we were at work drying the meat, which was but a short job. The flesh was cut into small pieces, dipped into hot brine, and spread upon the grass to dry; for by this time we had come to a place where the ground was covered with short grass. In this desolate country, with the burning rays of the sun pouring down and the hot winds blowing over the sea of sand, the air becomes so heated that it will almost cook an egg if left on the sand a few hours. I think this is why Kansas suffers so much from the drought. The winds pass over this large tract of sand, and, becoming thoroughly heated, sweep over the country, burning the life out of every green thing where it goes. It is amazing to stand on this sea of sand, where you can see nothing but the naked country around you. On learning of this great desert lying off the southwest part of Kansas, I was not surprised at the hot winds which come from that direction, sweeping across Kansas and Nebraska, and burning everything in the way.

Our meat being dried, we turned our course

for home, which we reached in due time, and pronounced our hunt a failure.

At another time brother Edward and I were out on the range alone. After finishing our hunt, we started for home, and were overtaken by a dreadful snowstorm. Having no tent or wagon-cover, we raised the wagon-tongue from the ground, stretched a green buffalo-hide over it, and crawled under, and out of the pelting storm. Hunters were frequently caught on the range in a snowstorm, and perished. Some of them, overtaken by the storm, and without shelter, have had the forethought to shoot down a buffalo, take out the entrails, and crawl in to save their lives. I remember being on the buffalo ground with my brother Joel, who is now in heaven. After our wagons were loaded, and we had started for home, the Indians came upon us where we had camped for the night, and seemed to be very angry because of our killing the buffaloes. These they claimed as their own, as the domestic ox was ours, and said if we did not cease shooting their cattle they would shoot ours. Being far out on the plains, and alone, we felt somewhat uneasy, knowing that we were

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at the mercy of these savages. After severely threatening us, to our joy they left, and we saw them no more. The next morning we started for home with a clear sky; but the clouds soon gathered, and the rain began to fall, and continued day and night until we reached our destination. The last night out, we traveled nearly all night in the rain. If the reader would know something of our suffering, let him imagine himself in the cold rain all night long, and very poorly clad at that, and he may have an idea how we suffered, being soaked and chilled by the weather. We reached home at last, our wagon laden with meat and with wolf and buffalo hides. The meat being thoroughly wet, we found it necessary to dry it as at the first.

Hunting the buffalo is not a very profitable business, and is attended with much danger from Indians, buffaloes, and the furious snowstorms of the plains. My own father had some narrow escapes from the bloody hands of the Indians. Having been away from camp all the afternoon, he was returning, when he saw a number of Indians trying to cut him off. He was then riding a small pony, and his only safety was in flight;

for if he could reach camp before overtaken, the Indians would not dare attack the outfit; so it was a race for the camp. His pony, being of a lazy disposition, was not inclined to do its best in the race, and father drew the ramrod from his gun to urge it on, the Indians all the while gaining on him as they ran. Just before they reached him, the camp was in sight, and the Indians faced about and disappeared in the distance. Another time the Indians tried to take him while out hunting on foot. Again, as before, they were aiming to cut off his retreat to camp. Taking in the situation at a glance, he saw it was quite perilous, for they were on fleet horses and he on foot; there was no time to waste, as they were coming like the wind; so the race began. Having much the advantage in distance, he got within call of the camp before they could overtake him. As soon as they saw the men there, they gave up the chase and disappeared among the hills. They are a cowardly set, and will hardly ever attack their equal in numbers.

For the information of the reader who may not know the Indian, I will say that no man is safe among them where it is possible to kill him

and they not be caught in the crime—unless he is willing to become an Indian among Indians. I have heard so much about the “noble sons of the forest,” of their excellent traits of character, and how they may be trusted by those who have befriended them, that, did I not know better, I might think that he who has befriended them might go among them in perfect safety. While it is true that there are a few Indians in the wild state who would spare the life of one who had befriended them, yet the great mass of them care nothing for the life of the white man, whether friend or foe. The wishes of the better class are unheeded, and the vile and bloodthirsty rule the tribe. My experience with Indians, and it has been extensive, has taught me that it is unsafe for any white man, who has not allied himself with them, to be found by them on the plains alone, whether he be friend or foe. No matter what unchristianized tribes they may be, all with which I am acquainted are alike in this respect. I have been on the plains with different tribes of Indians, some of whom were employed as Government soldiers for the purpose of protecting the builders of the Union Pacific

Railroad from the wild Indians. These soldiers were supplied with Government arms, provisions, and clothing, and received soldiers' wages. At the same time it was quite unsafe for a lone white man to be caught out of sight of camp by them, where they could kill him and make it appear that the wild Indians did it, as it was to meet the wild ones themselves. I know whereof I speak; for I speak from experience.

Hence you see, gentle reader, that, if we would subdue the bloodthirsty savage, and make of him a safe companion, he must be Christianized by being brought under the influence of the gospel.

CHAPTER III

MOVE TO NEBRASKA—MOVE TO THE BIG BLUE RIVER—OUR HOUSE—HUNTING ELK—EXPERIENCE WITH THE INDIANS—THE FIRST RELIGIOUS MEETINGS ON THE BLUE VALLEY IN BUTLER COUNTY.

LEAVING Kansas, or the Kansas Plains, in the year 1862, we moved to Nebraska, where we have since made our home. Our first stopping-place in the State was on Salt Creek, in Lancaster County, not far from where the city of Lincoln now stands. Coming to the country late in the season, the only work we could find was picking corn for some of the farmers who had preceded us to this part of the West. After providing a sufficient supply of grain to carry us and our teams through the winter, we moved out on the valley of the Big Blue River, in Butler County, and settled near where the town of Ulysses now stands. There we took claims, intending the place should be our future home. The first house we occupied in that wild country was a trapper's shanty, con-

sisting of a hole in the ground, covered with poles, grass, and dirt. Our company was composed of three men, one woman, and a child.

Our house being only about ten feet square, we found it very small quarters for five persons to winter in; but as the early settlers, in their small houses, could always find room for one more, we had ample room for any traveler who might seek shelter under our roof.

Having nothing to do, and living so far from neighbors, time seemed to move exceedingly slow. However, some of our time was occupied in hunting the elk and trapping the beaver, both of which abounded in that locality. In this way we got a supply of meat to drive away hunger, and furs to keep us warm.

One bright, beautiful day, such as is often seen in Nebraska, brother Richard and I went in search of game, thinking to have some sport and also replenish the larder. After several miles' travel, we discovered a small herd of elks leisurely feeding on the dry grass. Being so far out on the broad, open prairie, it was difficult to get within gunshot of them; but by crawling on the ground like a tortoise for nearly

half a mile, we got near enough to shoot them. By this time they had all lain down, thus making a very poor target to shoot at. To make sure of our game, we decided to remain flat on the ground until some of them should rise. After we had been lying thus perhaps for an hour, two of them arose to their feet, stretched themselves, and stood broadside toward us. We fired, and brought them both to the ground. We were now some eight or ten miles from home, with the sun nearly down. To leave our game unguarded during the night was only to abandon it for the wolves to devour; so it was determined that I should remain on guard during the night, while my brother went home after the team. You may be sure I had a lonely time that night; for the hungry wolves all about me kept up a continual howling, as if they would come and force me from my post. The next morning, bright and early, we were on our way home with a good supply of elk-meat.

During our stay in that lonely place we found far more Indians than white men. The former frequently came to our house, sometimes

for the purpose of begging, and sometimes just for a friendly call. Some of them were kind and trusty, but a large majority of them would plunder, steal, and lie. By frequently coming in contact with them, we learned some of their Indian ways. Among other things, we learned something about their laws in regard to married life. They practice polygamy, some of them having two or more wives. If a young man had no pony, he could have no wife. If he had one pony, he was entitled to one wife; but if he was the owner of two or more ponies he could have at least two wives. The men seemed well pleased with such laws, but the women hated them with the most bitter hatred. One of the squaws said to a white man: "Chacl stocok [white man] heap good; he have one wife. Pawnee [yellow man] no good; he have two wives." A young chief by the name of Peter Warnxty frequented our place, often bringing his two wives, who were sisters. Those wives were so bitter against each other that the husband was compelled to provide them with separate tents in order to prevent bloodshed, and possibly the death of one of his wives.

At one time we invited the young chief and his wives to come and take supper with us. At the appointed time came Peter and his newly-wedded wife, leaving the other at home. We asked him why he did not bring his other wife. He said, "O, they won't both go with me at the same time."

The last time those Indians visited our place we did them many little favors, and they seemed exceedingly friendly; but on leaving us they stole all the little things they could get their hands on, and drove off one of our horses. Thus you see how kindness wrought upon their unenlightened consciences. Some of the settlers who came to Nebraska still earlier than we related to us some of their troubles with the "red-skins," somewhere on Salt Creek, in Lancaster County. They said thieving and murdering bands often passed through that locality, giving the settlers a great deal of trouble. On one occasion, in the absence of the family, they broke into a man's house, and gathered up all the meat he had stored away for the winter, and made off with it. But before they had gone far, the theft was discovered, the alarm was

given, and the whole community rose up in arms and followed them in hot pursuit. Overtaking them, they punished them severely, beating some down with clubs and axes, and giving others a sound flogging. On another occasion, while the Indians were in the same locality, and the whites were having trouble with them, during the night, an old "buck" Indian crawled up into the branches of a large tree, which almost overshadowed the door of a white man's house, intending to murder him as soon as he should emerge from his door in the morning. Unhappily, however, for the would-be murderer, the first thing the settler did after getting out of bed, was to look through the window and discover Mr. Indian sitting on his perch among the branches of the tree. Lifting the window sufficiently to poke his gun out through the opening, he fired, leaving one savage less to disturb the quiet of that neighborhood. After this fatal incident, the Red Men left that locality in peaceable possession of the white settlers.

After winter had passed with its cold, stormy winds, and the warm sun had brought new life to earth, we set to work building houses and

making general preparation for the cultivation of the soil on our claims.

In the summer of 1863 our parents came, and settled near us, making now eight souls in that lonely place. Our youngest brother, who came with our parents, composed one of the number. We were about thirty miles from any other settler, and no post-office nor trading-point nearer than that. Having no neighbors, and no religious gatherings or Church privileges, we soon tired of our condition in that then wild and desolate country. As there was no religious service within reach of us, we determined to have something of the kind in father's house on Sunday; and I think I can safely say that the first religious gathering in that part of Butler County was in the summer of 1863, when father gathered his own family, at his own residence, to worship the Lord. I am quite sure that we were, at least, the first white settlers to sound the praises and glory of God in that part of the Big Blue Valley. Becoming dissatisfied with our situation, in the fall of 1863 we all moved to Gage County, near Beatrice, and left our claims for others who

might come and occupy them. In Gage County we found the white man's schools and churches. We now began farming in earnest, looking forward to times of plenty, comfort, and ease; but our expectations have not yet been realized.

Nebraska, like all other countries, has its drawbacks. Sometimes we have dry weather, sometimes hot winds, and sometimes the grasshoppers have eaten us out. All of these things combined made it doubly hard for the first settlers of Nebraska. We have seen the grasshoppers coming in clouds, having the appearance of an approaching snowstorm. Sometimes they poured down upon us like hail out of a dark storm-cloud, covering the ground in a few minutes. No one who has not seen the ravages of those hungry pests can know how destructive they are. We have known of their alighting on a field of corn nearly a foot high, and taking a twenty-acre piece in less than three hours' time, leaving it as bare as though it had never been planted.

Sometimes the dry weather and the ravages of the 'hoppers occasioned great scarcity and very high prices, and the homesteaders

were much straitened for food. I have known families who are now in good circumstances to sit down to a table with but little more than boiled wheat and potatoes for a meal. I call to mind one winter in the early days of Gage County, when there was a scant supply of provisions throughout the country, and about all the people obtained was drawn with teams from somewhere on the Missouri River. At the time to which I refer the merchants who supplied the community with the necessities of life were very scantily furnished with provisions, and they sent out teams for a new supply. Soon after they were gone, there came a heavy snowfall, blockading the roads and detaining the teams long past their allotted time. Because of this delay, food became scarce, and men grew desperate and impatient; and you know that a hungry man is soon out of patience anyway. After almost giving up the arrival of the teams in despair, some of the men concluded they would rather eat coon-meat than starve; so out they sallied for a coon-hunt, and their efforts were rewarded with three nice coons. Their game was nicely dressed and as nicely

cooked, and all who were so fortunate as to be permitted to partake of the feast declared the first coon very good. When they began to eat the second coon, it was not so good, and the third was very poor eating indeed. One of the men, in describing his experience, said, "One coon is very good eating, two coons are not so good, and I can not go the third coon at all." However, I should think that a real hungry man might relish even the third coon.

CHAPTER IV

THE GENERAL SLAUGHTER OF THE SETTLERS ON LITTLE BLUE RIVER IN 1864.

IN the fall of 1864 my brother Richard and I purchased a mowing-machine, and went up the Little Blue Valley as far as Spring Ranch, in Clay County, where we contracted to cut forty tons of hay for James Bainter, the owner of the ranch. We had been there but a few days when it was rumored that farther west, on the road, the Indians were stealing horses and killing the travelers on the highway. Being used to Indian scares, at first we paid no attention to the report. The country being thinly settled, we knew, if the Indians should make a raid upon the people, they could take the entire country with little trouble and loss to themselves.

All the settlements there at that time were along the Blue River; and from where the town of Alexandria now stands as far west as Spring

Ranch the country was occupied only by ranchmen, ranging from five to ten miles apart. There was a great deal of travel over this wagon-road from St. Joseph to Denver, and still farther west; and especially at this time of the year it was literally lined with teams, carrying either emigrants or freight to the Western market. Notwithstanding there were so many men on the road, they were poorly prepared to protect themselves if attacked by the Indians. Among forty or fifty men, probably not more than five or six pieces of firearms could be found. The men, expecting no trouble on leaving home, had made no preparation for self-defense.

Rumors continued coming from the West that the Indians were committing depredations all along the highway; and Richard and I, concluding there was danger of an attack at any time, planned accordingly. We had three horses with us, two of which we thought were very fleet. Our plan was as follows: We were making hay up the valley about two miles from the ranch. We determined that, at the first sight of an Indian, we would mount the two best horses, and fly for our lives, leaving the third

horse to follow or be captured. Some of the ranchmen thought there was danger, while others laughed at the idea. On telling our plan to some of them, they laughed and said, "We will not run if the Indians do come; for all we have in this world is here, and if it goes down, we will go with it." You know, some men are good choppers in time of harvest and good swimmers in the dead of winter. So with these men. They were exceedingly brave when they thought there was no danger, but not so brave when danger came, as the sequel will show.

The Indian excitement somewhat abated, and we began to feel quite easy. On Sunday, the seventh day of August, we went down the road about a mile to Pawnee Ranch, which was then kept by a Mr. Medcalf, and were invited to spend the day. The forepart of the day was spent in eating melons and in general conversation. The weather was calm, warm, and beautiful, and there was a great deal of travel on the road; for the people out here paid little attention to Sunday. About twelve o'clock, or soon after, Father Comstock, having come from a ranch not far from old Fort Kearney, was on

the way to his own home at Oak Grove Ranch, perhaps a distance of forty miles. Soon after his arrival the women began to prepare dinner, and the men fell into conversation about the Indians. About half-past three o'clock dinner was called. While the company were at the table, some remarks were made about the Indians making a general attack along the road. But as rumors were not so frightful as in the past, we concluded there was no cause for fear at the present time. Soon after dinner, and after Father Comstock had departed, some one chanced to step to the door, and saw three Indians passing the house on horseback. Rushing to the door, we saw they were advancing toward a lone man coming up the road with a load of corn. At a glance we saw they intended to murder him. Brother and I went with all possible haste to the barn for our horses, hoping we might rescue and save the man's life. On entering the barn we found the harness on our horses, which caused some delay. By the time the harness was stripped from the horses, and we were mounted and at the house receiving firearms, the Indians had shot

and were scalping the unfortunate man, who had fallen from his wagon into the dusty road. As we started from the house, the savages mounted their ponies, and were off like an arrow. Brother and I followed them into the hills, and soon lost sight of them. At first we were able to keep pace with them, and did shorten the distance between them and ourselves, until we began to climb the hillside, when they flew away from us like birds. Wheeling about, we returned, making as good, and perhaps even better, time than when chasing the Indians; for we thought others might be lying in ambush, and cut off our retreat. On reaching the wounded man, we found some of the men from the ranch there, ministering to him as best they could. On examining the wound, it was discovered that the ball had entered the back part of his head and come out through the mouth, inflicting a mortal wound. Notwithstanding his wound was fatal, he could talk, and seemed quite conscious. Some of the men knew him, and said, "It is Burk, from Beatrice." Beatrice was our home town, not far from our farm. So I thought

Mr. Burk would recognize me, and said to him, "Mr. Burk, do you know me?" After learning my name, he said, "Yes, I do."

The poor fellow fell from his wagon, and lay there wallowing in the dust, moaning with pain. When he fell from the wagon, his team took fright and ran to the ranch. Brother and I took his horses, hitched them to our wagon, and, with the help of other men, brought him to the house. After getting him into the wagon, he insisted that we should not move him until he was dead, begging us to let him alone.

He was cared for the very best under the circumstances. But we knew he must die, and that soon. Just before the going down of the sun his spirit took its flight. Only three days before this awful deed this man left his wife and children, expecting to return to them in a short time. But they will never see him on this side of eternity; for he is still sleeping in his lonely grave by the roadside. In all probability, it was more than a week before his family knew of their loss. There being no coffin, and nothing out of which to make one, he was wrapped in

his own blankets, and laid away to await the resurrection, where all things shall be made right.

We were now thoroughly aroused and on guard. All the available guns were taken from their dusty racks, where they had lain unused for weeks. They were cleaned, scoured, and put in order for immediate use. Looking for an attack any moment, we therefore made every possible preparation for defense. After all things were ready for a bloody conflict, we retired for the night. He who has lain and watched for and expected an attack from the blood-thirsty tribes may know something of our anxiety that night. Morning came, bright, clear, and beautiful, with no sign of the enemy anywhere, though we thought they were somewhere near.

After an early breakfast, we returned to Spring Ranch, and, after packing away some of Mr. Bainter's things, we loaded a wagon with provisions and bedding; and all moved down to Pawnee Ranch, where Mr. Burk was killed and buried. We hoped to collect enough men at this place to protect the women and children

of the two ranches, and possibly save some of our property. We remained there all that day, preparing for another attack, but as yet had seen no Indians excepting those who murdered Mr. Burk.

Up to this time we had heard nothing of the ranchmen on either side of us, not knowing whether they were killed, and we left alone, or whether we were the only ones disturbed.

Monday night came, bringing no report from abroad, and leaving us to watch and wait in dread suspense. When night came, we set a guard, that we might not be caught unprepared, should the enemy approach in the darkness. There being but few pieces of firearms in the company, the women gathered up all the axes, pitchforks, and, possibly, broomsticks, and brought them into the house, to be used in case of a close combat. The guard had been out on post but a short time, when bang! went his revolver; and the next moment he came bounding pellmell into the house, causing us to fly to arms ready for the conflict. Seeing no enemy, we inquired of him what he saw. He said he saw nothing, but heard a cracking in the brush.

There were loose cattle about the ranch, which, more than likely, made the noise that frightened him from his post. The poor fellow was so badly scared that he had fired a shot from his revolver, and ran, leaving his gun standing by a tree. By the way, this was one of those men who was so brave that he would not run if the Indians should come, but was the first to run, and that, too, when there were no Indians near. To our joy, Monday night passed without our being molested by the savages. Morning came, seemingly with more than usual beauty and loveliness, but brought us no news as to the condition of those around us, and we began to think that all the other people on the road were murdered.

Shortly after breakfast some four or five of us mounted our horses to ascertain the condition of the surrounding country, and, if possible, the whereabouts of the Indians. We had gone not more than two hundred yards when my brother Richard's horse was frightened at the guns, and became unmanageable. Not being allowed to run, he reared up so far that he fell backward. As the horse and rider came to the

ground, Richard's gun struck the ground with such force that its contents were discharged into one of his legs. The ball, entering the front part of his leg, passed between the thigh-bone and the main artery inside his thigh. His leg being bent as in a sitting position, the ball passed through the upper part of the limb, entered the calf of the leg, passed through, and lodged so near the surface of the instep that it was taken out with a jack-knife. He was taken back to the house, and his wounds were dressed according to our best knowledge. Mr. Bainter, who had had some experience in dressing wounds in the War of the Rebellion, took him in charge, and did all any one could have done under the circumstances. The bullet that passed through his leg was a half-ounce ball, and did fearful execution where it went, though, for some cause, it broke no bones, and barely missed the large artery inside his thigh, which, if it had been cut, would have caused his death in ten minutes. There was a hole in the upper part of his leg that, in dressing, we found room to draw a large silk handkerchief through.

This put an end to our reconnoitering that

day, and left us in greater suspense than before. Here was my brother, so badly wounded that we almost despaired of his life; and, while he was lying here helpless, we expected the Indians to come upon us at any moment.

After Richard was cared for and made as comfortable as possible under the existing circumstances, parties brought us the sad intelligence of a general massacre all along the road for eighty miles or more. We learned that the people for forty miles on either side of us were either killed, captured, or driven from their homes, and we—a mere handful of men, with a few women and children—were surrounded by the hostile “red-skins,” who were thirsting for our blood. There was no time to lose; we must prepare for emergencies. This we did by rolling loaded wagons around and in front of the house, thus forming very good breastworks. After all things were ready for a mortal combat, we had only to wait further developments. News of the most horrible murders on the road, both east and west of us, kept coming in all the forenoon. Some of the ranchmen who had escaped the murderers came to us for protection,

thereby strengthening our forces: Before night men had gathered from all sides of us, until we were about forty strong. No signs of Indians were seen until near four o'clock in the afternoon, at which time smoke was seen arising high in the air from the burning buildings down the road. Soon after seeing the smoke in the distance, two Indians were seen coming up the road, leisurely riding along as if they were innocent travelers intending to harm no one. There had come to us a man from California, whom we called "California Joe." He said, if we would let him take his choice of horses from the barn, he would go out and see what those fellows wanted; for by this time many of the stage-horses had been run in for protection, and there was a goodly number to choose from. Making his selection, he mounted and rode out toward the Indians, at the same time saying, "I will show you fellows how to fight Indians." He had gone probably not more than four hundred yards when, all at once, like magic, Indians sprang up all around him, coming from the hills and brush, where they were lying in ambush for him or for any other foolish man who might

dare to venture from the ranch. Their intentions were to cut off his retreat, and have their own sport in murdering him. But they were not quick enough; and he passed between them as they were closing in upon him from all sides. Since that event I have always thought that, if white men had so completely surrounded an Indian as they did him, he would have been literally riddled to pieces with bullets. They seemed to have ridden within fifteen feet of him, and fired; yet he made his escape, and reached the ranch with only a flesh wound in the muscle of the arm above the elbow. On returning to the house he was n't half so brave as when he left it. Not knowing how badly he was wounded, the men sprang to his assistance, only to learn that he was more frightened than hurt. With the combined fright and pain he nearly swooned away, and probably would have swooned away altogether but for the timely aid of a brave woman, who came to his rescue and led him away to bed. Never did any one show more bravery and presence of mind in time of imminent danger than some of the women at this critical hour. While the Indians were in

sight, coming towards the ranch, some of the women were busily engaged molding rifle-balls for the men, thus making ready for the fray. The reader may be sure that this was a trying time for me. Here was my helpless brother to be cared for, the Indians defiantly coming on to attack the ranch, and we knew not whether there were hundreds or thousands of them. Seeing the savages, I went to my brother, and told him they were coming. After inquiring how many there were, he said, "If they should overcome you, and you can save your life by flight, do n't stop for me, but fly at once." I told him I should never leave, but would stay with him to the last, as any kindly brother would have done. We determined that, if we were overcome, to spend our lives as dearly as possible, and die together. To us this was an exceedingly trying time; but we took it to the Lord, and asked him to help us. In the hour of extreme peril we found it good to look to the Lord for help.

When the Indians were first seen coming up the road, there was great excitement at the ranch. I well remember one poor, wicked fel-

low who, at the sight of the Indians, cried like a child. While the enemy approached, we were posting guards around the house. Some were hid in the weeds, and some in the barn. When the invaders began firing at the house, a man by the name of Joe Roper climbed upon the house to see what they were doing. But the whizzing balls came flying so close to his head that he concluded to take a lower position, at least for the time. The day of the general raid the Indians had taken captive a daughter of his, which caused him to swear vengeance against them. This incident we shall notice further on, as we proceed with our narrative. The Indians saw that we had the advantage of them in our breastworks, and they dared not venture within rifle range of the house, but kept at a good distance from us. Being thus far away, they elevated their guns so high that they shot far above our heads, hardly aiming low enough to strike the house. Occasionally the boys from the ranch would send them a volley of lead, to remind them that we were there and ready for them. The firing on both sides continued for some time, when the Indians

ceased and mostly disappeared from sight. We conjectured that they were waiting re-enforcements, or planning an attack. An Indian, riding a beautiful white pony, was seen circling about on the far hillside, in order to get the barn between himself and the house. We supposed he and his companions intended making their way to the barn, which would give them, as they thought, safe shelter from our guns and an equal chance in the fight. When we first saw them coming, we took in the situation, and placed a guard in the barn, to prevent their getting into it.

The savage on the white pony circled around until he was behind the barn and sheltered from our guns at the house. Knowing there was a safe guard in the barn, we laughed to see the savage steal his way there. The guard saw him coming, poked his gun through a hole, and waited until he came within a few rods of the barn, and then touched the trigger. The cap snapped. The gun missed fire, and away went his game. If ever an Indian made his pony run, I think that one did. He seemed to fly like a bird, and his shield sailed behind him like a kite

in the breeze. While he was running for dear life, the boys at the ranch raised a yell, and sent a volley of bullets after him, causing him to run, as the boys said, "as if the devil was after him." We afterwards learned that this white pony was regarded as the fleetest horse on the plains, and one of the great chiefs rode it during his successful fighting in a former massacre of the whites. If the reader likes to hear swearing, he should have been there to hear that guard when his gun missed fire. He swore much of the time all that night and all the next day, and, for aught I know, may be still at it.

The Indians, defeated in securing the barn for a fortification, tried another scheme. A low bank ran from near the river, and lay close to the house, behind which they could creep under cover, and get within easy range of the men defending the house. But they were soon caught at that trick. One of our men climbed into the upper part of the house, knocked out a bit of the chinking, and opened a hole through which to shoot. The man's wife, being in the company, climbed up beside her husband. They had been there but a short time when we heard a report

from the man's gun. A moment after the report, the woman poked her head through the upper floor, and cheerfully cried out, "Jim has killed one." We were now hopeful, even confident, that we could hold the fort and repel the enemy. Joy and gladness now seemed to flash from every countenance. The Indians thought they could creep up under cover of that bank and shoot the men at the house, then drop back behind the bank from sight. On raising their heads high enough to see us, the guard in the upper part of the house fired into them, bringing some of them closer to the ground, even lower than when they were creeping there. We could now see, as we thought, that the Indians were giving up the enterprise; for they ceased firing, and began to disappear in the brush. For a short time all was quiet, and there was a great calm. This deathlike stillness was broken by the frightened cattle running with all possible speed toward the ranch. We thought the savages were driving the cattle toward the house, following close behind, and using them as a shelter from our guns. Preparations were now made for a hand-to-hand fight.

With our guns presented ready to shoot, we stood our ground, only to see the cattle come up to the house feathered with arrows. Then the Indians withdrew, leaving us in possession of the fort. When they gave up the fight, and could do nothing else, they shot arrows into the cattle that were feeding upon the common.

After shooting the cattle, they went to Spring Ranch (Mr. Bainter's house), and fired it and everything around it that would burn. That was a great loss to Mr. Bainter; for he kept a general stock of groceries and a large amount of hay and corn, all of which were burned to ashes. He was only one of the many that suffered such a loss. Most of the ranches on the road, for miles each way, were burned to the ground. Before the Indians burned Liberty Farm Ranch, some of our neighboring men took a coach, such as was used on the stage-line, and went to the ranch to save groceries that were in store there. They loaded their valuables, and started on the return trip, when, in some unknown way, the things in the coach took fire. Before they were aware of the fire, they were

startled by pistol reports in quick succession, one after another. At first they thought the Indians were attacking them, but soon learned that the firing was inside the coach. Under extreme excitement they had thrown into the coach drygoods, boxes, cotton, clothes, matches, and revolvers, all together. The fire getting beyond control, they lifted the top of the coach from the running-gears, and let it and its contents burn.

The fight at Pawnee Ranch began about four o'clock in the afternoon, and continued until the shades of night were falling around us, when the savages left us, with only one wounded from their guns. This was California Joe, who had shown us how to fight Indians; and, but for his foolhardiness, he might not have been hurt.

The night after the battle at the ranch a strong guard was posted. I took a station, and at the same time had the care of my brother, who was so badly wounded that we found it necessary to bathe his leg at least every ten minutes with cold water to keep down the fever. We were in great suspense all night long, thinking

the Indians were only awaiting re-enforcements, and would return with redoubled force, and give us another battle.

Never was daylight hailed with greater joy than when the morning light streamed in upon us at that time. Sunrise found us hurriedly preparing to evacuate the post (ranch). But how could we fly with the sick and wounded? There was my brother, dangerously injured, and California Joe shot through the arm. Besides these wounded men, a woman in the company had given birth to a child when the Indians were making their first attack on the ranch. There was one stage-coach in the company, into which California Joe and the sick woman were placed. After admitting women to care for the sick, there was no room in the coach for my brother, and, that being the only spring-wagon of any kind in the entire outfit, the remaining choice was to put my brother into a lumber wagon, and thus carry him, though it should take his life, of which we were afraid.

We had a wonderfully exciting time in getting ready to leave. Men who, before the Indians came, said, "We will die beside our prop-

erty," were now the most anxious to get away and leave everything, that they might save themselves. The men who, in the thickest of the fight, were calm and thoughtful, now lost all control of themselves, and hardly knew what they were doing. When the wagon was ready for my brother, the men were so excited I could hardly get any one to help me lift him into it. We would speak to some one to help, who would say, "Yes, in just a minute;" and that was the last we would see of him. Before the procession was ready to move, we prevailed on two or three to help put him into the wagon. We then pulled out for Fort Kearney, some forty miles away. The day's march for the fort was a trying time to me. The jolting of the wagon over the rough ground caused my brother to suffer excruciating pain nearly all the way, and we could travel only at a very slow pace, while the other teams went off in a sweeping trot, leaving us far in the rear and an easy prey for the savages, should they come upon us.

Besides caring for the team and keeping a constant lookout for Indians, I was required to bathe my brother's leg about every ten minutes.

In this way we traveled that long distance, most of the time alone. We don't wish to make it appear that those men intended to be unkind, but merely to show they were so excited that they did not realize how unkindly they were acting.

For forty long miles, through the scorching sun and burning sand, the sick and wounded were carried without the slightest injury, excepting the pain given my brother while riding. The ranchmen where we stopped for the night were glad to entertain us for the sake of our company. Before the Indian excitement a night's lodging at this same ranch would have cost us at least one dollar each. The following morning the company, who together had fled from Pawnee Ranch, separated, some going east down the Platte River, and others going on farther west. I remained at Fort Kearney to care for my brother, whom we had sent there the night before, after we had stopped for the night.

On going to the hospital at the fort, I found Richard well cared for and doing well; so I engaged to work there as a nurse, and remained

until he was nearly able to be taken home. When he was so far recovered that the doctor thought he might be safely removed, I determined to go home and get a spring-wagon in which he could be carried with ease and safety. Putting a cover on a light spring-wagon, another brother and I went back to the fort after him. On our homeward journey all was well until the evening of the first day after leaving the fort. Darkness overtook us before finding a good camping-place, and we were traveling at a rapid gait, when, all at once, we saw what we thought to be hundreds of Indians coming towards us on the run. It would be folly to say we were not frightened. If any man's hair ever stood on end from fright, I should think ours were perfectly erect at that time. Stopping the team to prepare for the worst that might come upon us, we noticed the Indians halted also. On taking a more careful survey of the situation, we discovered that the supposed Indians were only a cluster of tall weeds in the distance.

Weeds are just as frightful as anything else when you really think they are savages swoop-

ing down upon you for your scalp. When a person is on the lookout for an enemy, he is almost sure to find something frightful. The third day after leaving the fort, we reached home in safety, where we rested unmolested, while others out West continued to suffer captivity and death from the hands of the Red Men.

CHAPTER V

THRILLING INCIDENTS OF THE INDIAN MASSACRE—A MAN
KILLED NOT FAR FROM FORT KEARNEY—MARTIN AND
HIS BOYS WOUNDED—FATHER EUBANKS AND BOY
KILLED—BILL AND MISS EUBANKS KILLED—MRS.
EUBANKS AND MISS ROPER TAKEN PRISONERS—THEO-
DORE EULIC, JOE AND FRED EUBANKS KILLED—KEN-
NEDY, BUTLER, AND KELLEY MURDERED, AND OTHER
DEPREDACTIONS.

I SHALL now turn the attention of the reader to the Indian depredations along the stage-line from near where the town of Alexandria now stands, in Thayer County, as far west as old Fort Kearney, a distance of nearly one hundred miles.

The Indians first made their presence known about the fort by stealing horses and killing such men as they caught away from the fort alone, at the same time keeping at a safe distance from the soldiers. One day some men from a ranch not far from the fort went out reconnoitering, to locate the Indians, and see what they were doing. They had gone but a short distance

into the sandhills when they were surprised by a body of Indians, and fled for their lives. Most of them, having good horses, kept a safe distance from the savages; but one unfortunate man fell far behind. He saw the Indians were shortening the distance between him and them, and urged his horse to its utmost speed; but they overtook and shot him. On first being shot he did not fall from his horse, but called out to the men: "Boys, I'm shot! For God's sake, do n't leave me!" There being so many Indians who were trying to cut off the retreat of the men, to stop for a moment to assist their comrade was certain death to all. So they sped on, and left the unfortunate man to his fate. The savages surrounded the poor fellow, and shot arrows into him until he fell from his horse, when they had their own good time in torturing him to death. The last his comrades saw of him, he was down on his elbows and knees, and the Indians around, shooting arrows into him. I have often thought how hard it must have been for those men to leave their helpless comrade in the hands of such merciless savages. The next day, when a company of men went out after

the body of the murdered man, they said it looked as if he had been beaten to death with stones. It seems strange that human beings can become so depraved and beastlike as these savages are. But such is the nature of uncivilized man. Hence we see the importance of carrying the blessed gospel to all men everywhere.

Another thrilling incident took place not far from Fort Kearney. This story I take from the man's own mouth of whom I now write. This man, Mr. Martin by name, and his two little boys were in the meadow loading hay, when they were surprised by the Indians coming down upon them like birds of prey. The father saw them in time to put the two boys on a horse he was leading behind the wagon, and told them to run to the house for their lives. He at the same time climbed upon the load of hay, and put whip to his horses, making them run for dear life. He was soon overtaken, however. The Indians drew up on each side of the wagon, and shot arrows at him. Sinking low down into the hay, he was pretty well protected from them. But one arrow penetrated the hay,

and struck him square on the collar bone, inflicting a slight wound. On seeing he could not save himself by running, he turned his rifle down upon them, and fired as he ran, when they left him and went in pursuit of the boys. The little fellows were so frightened that they left the road and took a more circuitous route for the house, but were soon overtaken by the Indians, who came up behind, and shot an arrow into them, pinning them together as they sat on the horse. In this condition the little fellows fell to the ground, thinking they were killed. The Indians seemed to think so, too, and passed on, leaving them without further molestation.

The father saw them fall from the horse, and he, too, thought they were killed; so he passed on to the house, got the rest of his family upon the load of hay, and started for the neighbors', leaving the little boys, as he supposed, dead on the ground where they had fallen. He had not gone more than a hundred yards from the house when one of his horses fell dead in the road. On examining the horse, he discovered that an arrow had been shot into him, penetrating his vitals.

The other horse being unharnessed, part of the family were placed on him, the rest going on foot. In this way they traveled until safely housed with some of their neighbors, where Mr. Martin told his sad story and spent much of the night in weeping because of his murdered boys. All the neighbors who could do so got together to protect themselves and their property from the bloody hands of the savages. Bright and early the next morning, a goodly number of well-armed men went to Mr. Martin's house in search of the bodies of the boys. On reaching the spot where they were seen to fall from the horse, they saw nothing of them. Then they ventured into the house, and observed traces of blood in different places on the floor. They now thought the boys had either been carried into the house by the Indians, and concealed somewhere, or that they were not dead, and had themselves entered, and were somewhere near. On searching the barn carefully, there, to the astonishment of all and the great joy of the father, they found them yet alive.

When the boys fell from the horse, the Indians came so close to them that they could

hear them talking; but supposing them to be dead, the Indians passed on, leaving them in the grass. The boys, being greatly frightened, and at the same time thinking themselves nearly dead, lay perfectly still until the Indians were gone. When all was so quiet about them that they dared move, they found that they were not so near dead as they had supposed. They then arose, and drew the arrow from their sides, which had only passed through the clothes and entered the flesh on the sides of their bodies. After discovering that they were not killed, they went to the house, and found the family had gone. There they were, all alone, not knowing whether their folks were dead or alive. It is likely they had heard their parents say that tobacco was good for a fresh wound; for they had searched the house, and, finding some of their father's plug tobacco, had applied it to their wounds. Being afraid to remain in the house, they went to the sod barn, where they remained until discovered by the men the next morning. They heard the men when they first came in search of them, but were so frightened that they dared not let their whereabouts be known. If I re-

member correctly, the boys were only seven and eight years old, and yet they showed a great deal of carefulness as well as forethought. As formerly stated, this story was told to me by Mr. Martin himself, and I saw the scar on his collar-bone where he had been wounded; and I saw the horse that fell dead in the road and the boys that were shot upon their horse; and I feel sure my story is true.

Mr. Martin was of German descent, and would become wonderfully excited when relating his hair-breadth escape. The last time I saw him he had purchased a large Henry rifle, and said he should get one for each of his boys, and that they would shoot every Indian they could get their eyes on.

About this time a little boy was stolen by the Indians from a family living near Fort Kearney. He was taken out on the plains not far from Cheyenne City, and sold to the Government soldiers for a thousand dollars. There is no doubt in my mind that this kidnaping was merely a matter of speculation on the part of the Indians. How the parents of this boy must have felt, believing their child among the In-

dians, somewhere a captive, or imagining that his little bones were bleaching on the prairie! How cruel to tear a child from its mother's bosom in such a way!

I will now continue my unfinished sketch of the horrible Indian massacre on the Little Blue River route. The general attack on the line of the massacre was made on Sunday, the seventh day of August, about four o'clock in the afternoon. As near as we could tell, the attack was made along the entire line at the same time and at the very moment the three Indians killed Mr. Burk at Pawnee Ranch. I have always thought that the attack on Sunday was providential; for if it had been on any other day, undoubtedly my brother and I would have been killed, notwithstanding our well-arranged plans for escape. As previously stated, we were at daily work near the river, where the Indians could come under cover of the brush and shoot us before we knew of their presence. If we had been, like many of the neighboring farmers, at work on Sunday, in all probability we would have been killed, as many of them were. As far as I have learned, nearly all who were out hunt-

ing or making hay on that day were murdered before they could reach home. This is one page in my experience where I feel sure that my religion saved my life; not only saved my life, but saved me from a most horrible death and an eternal hell.

Soon after learning how wickedly the people along the Little Blue were living, I said, "I am surprised that the Lord allows them to live here and prosper as they do." Here, as everywhere else, some good, honorable men were found, but none of them were religious, or seemed to care for religion at all. But a short time after expressing my surprise about their prospering under such circumstances, they were all either killed or driven from their homes, and most of their property destroyed.

On Sunday, the day of the general raid, Father Comstock, who called at Pawnee Ranch for dinner, as previously stated, continued his journey homeward to Oak Grove. He had scarcely disappeared in the distance when three Indians were seen riding with all possible speed toward Mr. Burk, whom they killed. Mr. Comstock had gone but a few miles down the river

to a place called the Narrows, near the mouth of Elk Creek, when he was suddenly surprised at finding by the roadside, dead and scalped, a well-known girl by the name of Eubanks, and Bill Eubanks, her brother, lying dead on a sand-bar in the river. Here leaving the road, Father Comstock passed on to the high prairie, and in this way reached home without molestation. On coming near his own house, he rode out upon a hill northwest of the place, where he could look down, and see if all was right. One of the hired men at the ranch saw him coming, and, supposing him to be an Indian, drew his large Henry rifle to shoot him, but for some cause did not fire; so the old gentleman was saved from losing his life by the hand of a friend.

On the same evening, Father Eubanks and one of his boys, about twelve years old, were riding down the river in an ox-cart to visit Joe Eubanks, when the Indians came upon and killed them, mutilating their bodies in a most fearful manner, and scalping the boy from ear to ear. As the old gentleman was bald, his head was not disturbed. Leaving their bodies in the road, they shot the oxen full of arrows, which those

suffering animals carried nearly a week before they were found and relieved.

On that fatal and eventful evening, Miss Laura Roper, Bill Eubanks's wife, and a Miss Eubanks, were out hunting wild grapes, when the Indians made a raid on their house. The women were just a short distance from home, and Bill Eubanks and a little boy were at the house alone. Hearing a noise at the house, the girls looked in that direction, and saw Mr. Eubanks running up the river toward them, closely followed by the Indians. The house was a little below the Narrows, and Bill ran from there to the Narrows and attempted to cross the river, when he was overtaken, shot, and left lying on the sandbar in the river. When he fell, he was not far from the girls, who were hid in the brush. What a heart-rending scene for Mrs. Eubanks as she looked from her hiding-place and saw her husband fall beneath the savage hand of the Red Man!

The women were well concealed even from the keen eyes of the savages, and but for Mrs. Eubanks's little child, which she had with her, crying when it saw the Indians coming towards

them, they, in all probability, would have escaped the murderers altogether. The crying of the child having revealed their whereabouts, they were seized and taken down to the river where the husband's body lay, and ordered to mount ponies which the Indians had brought for them to ride. It is evident that the capturing of these women and the subsequent selling of them to the Government was a prearranged plan of the Indians for the sole purpose of getting money. When the girls were ordered to mount the ponies, Mrs. Eubanks and Miss Roper obeyed, but Miss Eubanks refused, and was struck dead with their tomahawks, and almost the entire scalp taken, leaving but little hair on the back part of her head. The little boy at the house with Bill Eubanks was wounded and ran up a draw about twenty rods east of the spot where the girl and Bill were killed. How long he lay there alone, suffering the agonies of death, no one ever knew. One week later, his little remains were found lying in the grass in a state of decomposition. Laura Roper, Mrs. Eubanks, and her little boy were taken from the side of the dead girl, carried across the river past the

murdered man on the sandbar, and hurried across the plains to the mountains. Laura showed considerable bravery during her captivity, and bore up under her afflictions so well that the Indians said she was "heap brave squaw," and treated her kindly. After a captivity of about three months she was taken near Denver, and sold to the Government for a good sum of money. Mrs. Eubanks took her afflictions very hard, and was not so well treated as Laura. After she had been in captivity a while the Indians frequently whipped her little boy, just to make her cry. After four long months of prison life among the Indians, she and her little boy were taken to Fort Phil Kearney, and traded to the whites. The Indians told the whites that they were of a friendly tribe, and had bought the prisoners of the Cheyennes, and brought them to get their money of the white man and set them free; whereupon the Government paid them a large sum, and let them go. It was reported that the Indians who brought Mrs. Eubanks in and sold her, were the same that had captured her, and they boasted among other Indians that they not only intended to sell her

to the Government, but to capture others, and trade them for the flour and ponies of the white man. They even tried to recapture Mrs. Eubanks before getting out of the Indian country, and came so near as to fire into the coach in which she was riding homeward.

Among the many outrageous acts committed along the road at this perilous time, was that of completely wrecking a train of about forty wagons at Little Blue Station, where the men had camped for dinner. The cattle were turned out upon the grass to graze; but the few mules in the train were kept close to the camp. While the men were preparing their meal, the Indians came down upon them, and drove off all their oxen. A few wagons were then unloaded by the owners' throwing out flour, whisky, and brandy barrels to the ground. To these wagons mule-teams were hitched, and the men fled for their lives. After they had evacuated the camp, leaving behind their entire stock of goods, the Indians returned and burned the wagons, cut holes into the barrels and kegs that contained any kind of liquid, and let the contents pour upon the ground. Though there were some barrels of

whisky, a little flour, and some silverware, they left them unmolested. Thousands of dollars were destroyed in a few moments of time.

Below we give a pen-picture of the murderous deeds perpetrated near Kiowa Ranch. A boy by the name of Theodore Eulic came from a farm some two miles above Kiowa, with butter to sell. On returning home in the afternoon the Indians from the hills dropped down upon him, shot him from his horse, and took his scalp. A bullet had passed through his body, and arrows were still fast in him when found. About the same time that this boy started for home, Joe and Fred Eubanks and John Palmer crossed the river near Kiowa for the purpose of raking up newly-mown hay and looking for a good place to mow the next day. Fred mounted the rake, and went to work raking hay; Joe mounted his pony, and went down the river in search of grass; while Palmer returned to the house for water. Joe went on down the river below the ranch, where the Indians shot him, took his pony, and fled. Some of the men about the ranch saw them going off with Joe's pony, but were not prepared to follow them. Mr. Eubanks's wife was at the

ranch, almost within calling distance of him, but no one but the Father above knew where he was. Those who afterwards found his body thought he must have lived a considerable length of time after being wounded. While raking hay, the Indians came upon Fred, killed him, took his horse, and fled into the hills. When Mr. Palmer returned with a jug of water, he found him lying beside his rake, dead and scalped. A man named Kennedy, who lived on the river above Kiowa, in Nuckolls County, a short distance from the county-line, was also killed. He and a boy about fourteen years of age were living in a cabin where the hills and the river come nearly together. Mr. Kennedy was killed in the house, but by some means the boy succeeded in making his escape, and afterwards proved himself quite a hero, which shall be noticed further on.

We will now picture the horrible scene enacted at Oak Grove, where the Comstock boys so nobly and bravely defended themselves and loved ones from the torturing hands of a cruel and bloody foe. As stated before, Father Comstock was not present when the raid was made upon his home, but some of his boys, then young

men, were. Two men, named Butler and Kelley, were at the ranch at this time; but why, I do not know. When the Indians came to the house, Butler and Kelley went to the door to talk with them. They seemed quite friendly, and said they were Pawnees, and were hunting horses; but the men knew they were Cheyennes, and told them so. When too late to save themselves, the unfortunate men saw that the Indians intended mischief, and turned to go into the house, but were both shot in the back with arrows. An arrow lodged in Mr. Kelley's body, with one end protruding from his back and the other from his breast. An arrow passed through Mr. Butler's body, and fell on the ground in front of him. When the two men were shot the family started upstairs as Butler fell dead at the foot of them. Mr. Kelley made his way upstairs with the family, handed his revolver to Harry Comstock, and said, "Here, Harry, take this and fight to the last;" then pulled the arrow from his body with his own hands, and died in a few minutes. The boys punched holes through the house and fired upon the Indians until they were glad to fly for their lives.

In the meantime a boy by the name of George Hunt, and a man whose name I did not learn, were herding horses on the banks of the river for Mr. Comstock. The Indians came to them, and appeared very friendly until they heard the report of a distant gun, which seemed to be a signal for them to commence their cruel and bloody work. One of them struck the man with a knife, and another snatched his gun from him—a large Henry rifle—and shot him with five or six arrows; they wounded George in the leg with a revolver, and left both for dead. While the Indians were catching the loose horses their victims arose, went to the river, and escaped under cover of the bank. The man finally died from his wounds, but the boy recovered, having only a flesh wound. The day after the raid, Mr. Comstock took his family and a few household effects, and left his home, thinking the Indians might return and murder them all. In a day or two after leaving, the Indians did return, and burned the house with all its contents. The bodies of Kelley and Butler having been left in the house, they too were consumed by the flames. Next day after the raid, Bob Emery, a coach-driver,

came to Kiowa Station on his way to Fort Kearney. When he was told of the cruel murders along the line, and that he had better not venture any farther, he said he was used to the Indians; he had driven among them before when they were hostile, and should n't back down for them now. When the men saw that he was determined to go, as many of them as the coach would hold climbed into it and on top of it, and went with him. Bob had four good horses, and drove bravely forward until reaching the place where Kennedy was killed. As he was in the act of driving down the hill into the valley where he could not have turned, he saw the heads of about forty Indians in the brush below, lying in ambush. He wheeled his horses in the nick of time at a place where he had just sufficient room to move around, and get back into the road. While he was turning the Indians sprang from their hiding-place in hot pursuit. It was now a race for life. Bob was a cool-headed, steady-nerved fellow, and an excellent driver; so he whipped his horses into a keen run, with forty Indians after him, firing at the coach. The men on top of the coach kept them at a distance by

holding their guns in position ready to shoot. The Indians seemed very careful about rushing into danger, and dared not come close enough to do much harm. Among those on top of the coach helping to keep the Indians at bay was the fourteen-year-old boy who was with Kennedy when killed.

The race started in Nuckolls County. After running about half a mile, the coach crossed the county line into Thayer County, the Indians after it, yelling and shooting at every jump. In the race one horse stumbled and nearly fell, which caused some alarm, for at first it was thought a ball had struck him. While the Indians were firing at the coach and the lead was flying around like hail, Bob put the "bud" to his horses, at the same time holding a steady rein to keep them in the road. The chase continued probably for about two miles and a half, with some of the Indians on each side of the coach, and others behind, firing and yelling as they ran. When the Indians saw they were defeated and gave up the chase, they turned aside and shot a number of cattle that were near by.

The soldiers at Fort Kearney, hearing of our trouble on the Little Blue, came to our relief. Captain Murphy was sent out with a company, and instructed to go to Pawnee Ranch and relieve us. While fleeing from Pawnee Ranch after the battle there, we met Murphy and his men. When first seen at a distance, we supposed they were the savages coming to give us another battle, so we corralled our wagons and teams, and got ready for the onslaught. But to our joy we soon discovered they were soldiers coming to our relief. Captain Murphy fell in with some citizens from Beatrice, among them my brother Edward, who came up on the Blue to look after the dead as well as the living. After caring for the dead along the line of the massacre, they went in pursuit of the invaders and murderers. About eight miles west of Little Blue Station, two of the scouts were surprised by the Indians, and their retreat cut off. One of them was an Omaha Indian, and belonged to Captain Murphy's company. The last seen of him, he was surrounded by the wild Indians and bravely fighting for his life. The other scout, named Cline, was one of

my neighbors from Beatrice. He was riding a very fast horse, and, on discovering that he was surrounded, put whip to his animal, and got back to the command, but, in his run for life, lost his cap and gun. This Indian escapade brought on what was afterwards called the battle of Elk Creek. There seemed to be more than a thousand Indians attacking Murphy's squad of little more than a hundred men. Captain Murphy had with him a small cannon, which he fired upon the Indians, scattering them hither and thither. At the first shot the cannon was disabled, and the captain began a retreat. The firing was kept up on both sides for three or four miles. During the fight old Mr. Blair, a citizen from the mouth of Sandy Creek, dismounted from his horse, and fired at an Indian not very far away. At the report of the gun the Indian, as he thought, fell from his horse, which ran away. As the grass was very short, Mr. Blair expected to find his dead Indian on the ground, but could see nothing of him. He then turned his eyes to the flying pony, and saw the red-skin straighten himself up on the pony's back. When an Indian sees that he is being shot at, he will

drop down on the opposite side of his pony and ride in this way until out of danger. Sometimes he is lashed to the pony, so that, if he should be killed, his dead body will be carried from the field.

While the soldiers were retreating, the Indians kept running around and up the draws, and firing at the boys as they were crossing the ravine. In crossing a draw, the horse of Joe Roper—the father of the captured girl, Laura Roper—was slightly wounded, and the man said some of the flying lead struck his boot-heel. A wagon-boss whose outfit was captured by the Indians, determined to kill one; so he gave chase to an Indian who was close by, and followed him across a ravine. As the pursuer was crossing the ravine, another Indian, lying in ambush, shot him in the back with an arrow, and he fell from his horse and died instantly. The boys obtained his body, took it down to Little Blue Station, and buried it there. The fight ended shortly after this incident. The rest of the company retreated in safety, the wagon-boss and Murphy's scout being the only loss during the fight. I never knew what became of the scout. It was

reported, however, that, surrounded by Indians as he was, he succeeded in escaping.

Only those who have been among the Indians, and seen their bloody work, can know how cruel they are. The Sioux and Cheyenne Indians would kill and scalp the early pioneer women, and braid their hair into lariat-ropes and bridle-reins. One of these ropes was taken from the Sioux Indians about forty years ago. The early pioneers were so enraged at this cruel work that, whenever encountering the savage fiends, they would fight with such courage as to surprise our bravest military men. Sometimes in the hardest of the battle, when they were greatly outnumbered by the foe and almost overpowered, some old pioneer would run along the line, calling out, "Boys, remember the hair lariat! remember the hair lariat!" Maddened at the thought of the hair of their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters being braided into lariats and bridle-reins, these pioneers would fight with renewed courage till it seemed as if another avenging army had sprung out of the earth; and the red-skins were compelled to fly for their lives.

Women and young girls were often captured and dragged across the plains to the Rocky Mountains, where they were sometimes sold to the whites, and sometimes rescued by their friends. Frequently the attempt to rescue them assured their falling beneath the savage tomahawk or scalping-knife.

Now, my dear readers, if you think that the early settlers were too hard on the murderers of their wives and daughters, you undoubtedly would change your mind if called to pass through a like experience. If you could have witnessed one of the early battles in the far West, you would have been struck with wonder at seeing an old, gray-haired man in front of the battle, struggling hand to hand with the savage foe, his white locks waving in the air as he fought more like a lion than an old man. Perhaps you would say, "O, he is too bloodthirsty! He gluts his vengeance on these poor, ignorant people." But on learning that his daughter is a captive, and that he is fighting to save his child, believing that if she is not rescued in this struggle, before another day she may be tied to a burning stake,

and cruelly tortured to death in the flames, then you will say, "If my daughter were a captive, I would fight as he does." I have fought by the side of a father whose daughter was then a captive among the Indians, and, witnessing his desperate courage, could imagine something of his feelings as he thought of his dear child.

CHAPTER VI

OUR TRIP UP THE LITTLE BLUE RIVER AFTER THE RAID—SOME REMARKS ON THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLS THE INDIANS.

AFTER the Indian troubles were passed, and we thought there was no more danger, my brother Edward and I went up the Blue River as far as Spring Ranch to bring home the mower we had left there when we fled from the Indians. After passing through the little town of Meridian, near where the Big Sandy empties into the Little Blue River, in Thayer County, we found the country vacated as far west as Fort Kearney. Nearly all the ranches along the road had been burned to ashes, and the property totally destroyed. At some of the ranches we could see where the Indians had gone into the houses, killed the inmates, smashed the dishes to pieces, ripped open the bed-ticks, and scattered the feathers in every direction. We saw the ruins of the large freight-train that was wrecked at

Little Blue Station. Here we found whisky, molasses, and kerosene barrels, mostly empty, their contents having been poured upon the ground. There were tons of crockery-ware of the best quality, all broken to pieces in one large pile. A quantity of flour and a little silverware were left undisturbed. Part of the silverware we carried home, and I suppose it is yet in possession of some of the family. The whole country was indeed a desolate region. Where a few weeks before might be seen life, activity, and progress, now death supremely reigned. Only a few days in the past at most of these ranches on the Blue, the husband, wife, and children were living happily together; and now some of them were dead, while others were prisoners, dragged across the plains by the murderers of their loved ones.

Passing up the river as far as Spring Ranch, we found the mower in the hay-field where we had left it. Hitching it to our wagon, we returned to Pawnee Ranch, and camped for the night. Seeing what appeared to be fresh Indian signs, we were somewhat startled, and thought we had again got into close quarters, and in all probability would have to fight our way out. If

the Indians were still in the country we felt sure that we were very unsafely surrounded.

Taking our horses two or three hundred yards from the house, we attached them to the lariat-ropes, and lay down by them, thinking that, if Indians should come during the night, the horses would scent them, and give us warning in time for self-defense. We had been there but a short time, when, sure enough, the horses gave the expected signal, by throwing up their heads and snorting, that danger was nigh. Turning our eyes in the direction the horses were looking, we saw the enemy, which appeared to be an Indian on horseback. Making sure our guns were ready for service, we lay down with our faces to the ground, and, with presented guns, awaited the approach of the foe. Our plan was that when the horseman should come within a few rods of us, we would call him to halt, and if he did not obey at once, we would fire upon him. The enemy came slowly forward, thus giving us a good chance to be well prepared for mortal combat. He drew closer and closer, until we thought it about time to call him to halt, when, to our astonishment as well as joy, we dis-

covered that our enemy was an old, poor, lame mule, which had been left there alone to die. Notwithstanding the harmlessness of this poor mule, we were just as badly frightened as if the Indians were upon us. We soon arrived home in safety, leaving the Little Blue Country to the Indians, so far as we were concerned.

Much has been said and written about the abuse and the civilizing of the Red Man. Many claim that the Indians have been unmercifully treated by the white people of America, which I wish to show is not altogether true. I am frank to admit that some Indian traders, and possibly some early settlers, have woefully cheated them, yet not more than thousands of our own people have been wronged by the same class of men. One great cry is, that the poor, helpless Indian has been driven from his home and his hunting-grounds, and shoved to the Far West, where it is almost impossible for him to live without stealing. Has not the Government bought and paid for these lands? Surely it has in most cases, if not in all, where the Indians have been removed from them. They have nothing, then, to complain of from that source.

If the Indians had settled on and cultivated these lands, they need not have left them; for the Government would have neither driven them away nor compelled them to sell, except such as they did not occupy. The good Lord never intended that this fertile soil should remain idle, and produce nothing. If the Red Men would neither cultivate nor sell these wild lands, I contend that, after offering them a reasonable compensation, the Government had a right to take and use them. As they saw fit to sell these lands rather than to cultivate them, it was the duty of the Government to buy, and send its citizens to them. Much of my life has been spent on the border settlement near the Indians, so I know whereof I speak. As a general rule, the frontier settlers have used the Indians well, many times giving them something to eat when they had scarcely enough for their own children. They have fed them when hungry, and when cold have taken them into their houses and warmed them, not unfrequently compensated by having their property stolen and members of their family murdered. Many of the frontier settlers have done more towards feeding the

hungry Indians than thousands of our wealthy people will do toward feeding the poor white beggars at their own doors. Frequently a squad of big hungry Indians have come to our house, staid over night, were given all they could eat, and the next morning were sent on their way rejoicing, without costing them a cent; and hundreds of other families did the same thing. I know of no people in the world who have had so much done for them as the American Indians, both by the Government and individuals. For proof of what I say, consult the Indian Bureau, where you may learn what the Government has been and is doing for them.

The sources from which the money for Indian education is obtained are Congressional appropriations, treaty interests and funds, and the treasuries of religious bodies which maintain Indian missions. This money was received and distributed among the uncivilized Indian in 1886-7 as follows: Receipts from the Government for general support, \$912,625; support of 770 students at various institutions, \$126,040; buildings, current appropriations, \$134,750; unexpended appropriation, \$19,804; transportation

of pupils, \$28,000; purchases of live stock, \$10,000; treaty interest and other funds, \$163,700. Total from the Government, \$1,394,919. Expenditures by Government: For boarding and day schools and pupils, \$1,095,380; building sites and repairs, \$76,080; live stock, \$8,500; transportation of pupils, \$2,400. Total by Government, \$1,203,960. By the State of New York, \$9,122; by American Missionary Association for schools and Church work, \$47,921; by the Society of Friends, \$21,729. Grand total, \$1,282,732. The total Government appropriations for the Indians in 1789, from March 4, 1788, to June 30, 1789, was, \$2,422,902.30. In recent years it was, in 1885, \$6,552,425; in 1886, \$6,099,158; in 1889, \$6,249,303.

Thus the reader may see how the Government is providing for the "poor, neglected Indians." Before I leave this subject, I wish to say something in regard to the civilizing of the Red Man; for I think thousands of dollars have been needlessly expended for this purpose. If our Government had pursued a proper course toward the Indians, they would not have committed one-half the depredations traced to them,

nor needed one-half the money that has been expended for them, and many more of them would have been civilized, and now in a prosperous condition. I do not wish to set myself up against the Government officials in regard to the controlling of the Indians, but I feel sure that the Government has not adopted the wisest plan to accomplish what it desired to do.

In the first place, the most successful way to develop man, intellectually, morally, and financially, is to throw him on his own resources, and thus give him something to do. You may take some of our brightest boys, and give them all they need to eat and wear, and plenty of money to spend in idleness. Let them raise their children in the same way, and you will have a lot of degenerate profligates and vile men and women, whom you never can improve so long as they remain in idleness. Idleness breeds crime and ignorance, and turns the saint to the savage. Therefore, I contend that if, in some way, the Indians had been compelled to work for their bread or starve, they might have been civilized and Christianized long before this. But they have been kept in idleness, where it is im-

possible to keep any one, and at the same time develop the moral and intellectual faculties. Here the question will naturally arise, How can this be done? This, I know, is a difficult question to answer; but I will give some suggestions. If the Government had bought the Indian lands and paid for them at once, or as soon as it was able, and altogether dispensed with the annuities paid the Indians, they would have soon spent their money, and, thrown upon their own resources, would have been compelled to work for what they needed.

The expectation of the annual payment has encouraged them in idleness, and made it more difficult for the missionaries to manage them. They have come to think that the Government is in duty bound to provide for them, and so there is no inducement to work.

Many times they foolishly barter away their annual supplies, which being thus exhausted long before the time for another installment, they get cold and hungry, complain of the Government because it does not feed and clothe them better, and wreak vengeance upon the frontier settlers along the border-line.

I realize that the Government is trying to teach them to work for themselves. But there is one great difficulty in the way; it is doing too much of the work itself. It is evident that these people can never be taught to work until compelled to do so or starve. If some such plan had been adopted years ago, there would not have been the suffering among them there has been under the present mode of ministering to them; for as soon as the wild game on which they depended was gone, they would have provided for themselves in some other way.

The reader may say, "Have not various tribes been civilized, Christianized, and taught to work under the present mode of administration?" So far as I know, not one tribe has ever been civilized and taught to work so long as it was numerically strong enough to maintain its rights and cope with other wild tribes. Only when they could no longer defend themselves in the wild state, could they be induced to settle down and go to work. So long as there are large tribes of Indians allowed to roam the plains, supported by the Government, just so long will there be wild savages to murder border.

settlers. So far as I can learn, there is not as much farming done by the wild tribes nowadays as by their ancestors when first found in America. Why is this? Simply because they are supported by the Government, and "do n't have to" work.

The reader may think that I am uncharitable toward the poor Red Man of the plains, but I think I have due charity for him. I wish to do him all the good I can, and it is for his benefit that I write these lines. If I properly understand the nature of charity, it encourages neither ignorance nor idleness, and it is not charity to help a man that will not help himself. I believe, as the Scriptures teach, that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat.

I have another and more severe criticism on the means employed by the Government to make and keep the Indians peaceable. The way the Government has made treaties with them has tended to make them hostile and troublesome. Usually, when they have broken out and murdered the settlers, they have done their evil work and hurried out of reach of justice. A few days afterward the soldiers would be ordered

to pursue them, and sometimes succeeded in overtaking and punishing them; but generally the Indians evaded them, escaping to the plains and hiding. The soldiers, after following them a few days, would give up the chase, and return home. Thus escaping punishment, the Indians would soon return, and steal and murder until the Government gave them a large sum of money on their promising to cease hostilities and be peaceable. As long as this money lasted they were very friendly; but they have learned that, when in need, the easiest way to supply their wants is again to become hostile to the whites along the border-line, and force the Government to give them another sum of money to purchase peace. If I am correctly informed, this mode of procedure has been carried on for many years. I have made a rough estimate, and find that the Government has given at least a thousand dollars to the Indians for each white person murdered by them. In consulting the Indian Bureau of 1886, I notice that the treaty interest alone amounted to more than \$160,000. Surely the giving of such large sums of money for treaties of peace is an incentive to the In-

dians to repeat their cruel deeds of bloodshed. I was informed that the Government paid \$1,500 for the return of Mrs. Eubanks and Miss Laura Roper, who were made prisoners at the time of the slaughtering of the settlers on the Little Blue River. I also learned that the little boy whom the Indians captured near Fort Kearney was taken West and sold to the Government for \$1,000. Besides the large sum of money expended for these captives, the Government paid the Indians still more to induce them to behave themselves. It seems to me that the better course for the Government, when the Indians broke out and murdered the white settlers, was to continue warring with them until they were glad to treat on almost any terms. The Government should have thoroughly whipped them until they begged for peace, and taken from their annuities at least a thousand dollars for each white person murdered or captured by them. If this plan had been adopted fifty years ago, most of the Indians might now be civilized. At least there would not have been one-half as many of our frontiersmen killed by them. While it might seem cruel to fall upon and, if necessary,

kill a large number to make them know their place and keep it, yet in the outcome this would doubtless have saved many lives of both Indians and white men. One complete conquest of a child is worth more to it than a thousand punishments without conquering.

I feel sure that the massacre along the Little Blue in 1864 was wholly for the purpose of forcing money from the Government. Although the savages ran off horses and cattle belonging to the settlers along the Blue, I think money from the Government was the moving cause of that terrible slaughter. I know men who, by Indian ravages, lost all their property, and have never received a cent for it from any source; they should have been reimbursed from the Indian annuities. I pity the Indians, and realize that we ought to do all in our power to civilize and Christianize them, but they should be made to keep their place, and to pay for all the property they have destroyed and the lives they have taken. The Congress of 1891 did finally pass a bill allowing the settlers remuneration for the loss of their property by the Indians, such sums to be taken from the Indian annuities. This

was a step in the right direction, but ought to have been made years ago. If the Government would now take away their guns and ponies, and give them tools for farming, it would be but a short time before they would be farmers and doing well. Roaming the prairies and hunting from year to year is degenerating, and as long as the Indians are allowed to do this, and receive support from the Government, they will be wild and unmanageable. At first the Indians might think the Government cruel in preventing it, but in a short time they would learn to be grateful. It is more cruel to allow any person or people to go on in idleness and ignorance than to compel them to do something for themselves. If the Indians were made to lay down their arms, and stay at home and work, the missionaries could do more for them in one year than they have done in the last forty years. God pity the Indian! But if they will not do something for themselves, of their own free will, let us compel them!

Commissioner Jones says the cutting off of rations from all Indians, except those who are incapacitated from earning a support, has had

very gratifying results, and, if followed up, will ultimately lead to the abolition of the reservation and the absorption of the Indian into our body politic. He makes the emphatic statement that the present Indian educational system, taken as a whole, is not calculated to produce the results that were anticipated so hopefully, and may be added to the obstacles to independence and self-support. Under this class Mr. Jones has placed indiscriminate issues of rations, periodical distribution of large sums of money, and the general leasing of allotments. In the last thirty-three years, the report says, over \$240,000,000 has been spent on an Indian population not exceeding 180,000. Notwithstanding this, the Indian is still on his reservation, being fed; money is still being paid him; he is still dependent on the Government for existence; he is "little, if any, nearer the goal of independence than he was thirty years ago; and if the present policy is continued, he will get little, if any, nearer in thirty years to come."

After the Indian excitement had died away, we turned our attention to farming near Beatrice, where we first settled, in Gage County.

In the spring of 1865 we bought a large, well-improved farm, and planted a hundred and forty acres of corn. This year proving to be a good season for corn, we raised an abundant crop, which we shelled and drew out on the Little Blue; for by this time the stage-line, broken by the Indians, was repaired and running as before, giving us a good market for our grain.

CHAPTER VI

OUR TRIP TO THE BLACK HILLS—A FIGHT WITH THE INDIANS
AT PLUM CREEK—FRIGHTENED AT GENERAL CUSTER'S
COMMAND—CROSSING THE PLATTE RIVER—WORK AT
JULESBURG—KEEPING BOARDING-TENT FOR THE RAIL-
ROAD MEN—MAKING LIME IN THE HILLS—FRIGHTENED
BY THE INDIANS—RETURN HOME.

ON the first day of January, 1867, Miss Amelia Potts and I were united in holy wedlock, agreeing to share the joys and sorrows of life together so long as we both should live. Setting out in life without the means to accomplish our most moderate wishes, we keenly felt the importance of a special effort to prepare a home and its comforts. With nothing but our hands to depend upon, we set them to work at once.

In the spring of 1867, when the Union Pacific Railroad was being built from Omaha to the Black Hills, there was considerable excitement about the wages the contractors were paying for work on the grade. Many of the young men of our locality were talking of going out

there to work during the summer and fall season. My brother Richard, being anxious to go, insisted on my going with him. After due consideration, I concluded that it would be the best thing I could do; but Mrs. Wells was not willing that I should leave her at home alone, and wanted to go with me. At first I disapproved of her venturing among the wild Indians on the plains; for I knew what it was for women to be among Indians in time of trouble, and there were already reports of Indian depredations along the line of the railroad, which made me more fearful of her going among them. But she concluded that if I could go, she could; so, after much deliberation, we determined that both should try our fortune on the railroad among the Indians of the plains.

Brother and I purchased two good breech-loading rifles for self-defense, should the Indians come upon us as they had previously done. Our former troubles with them were not forgotten, and we determined to be better prepared to meet them. As we had nothing to leave but the few household effects we had accumulated during the winter, we could go without any loss.

Purchasing a small span of horses and an old wagon for the journey, about the first of May, 1867, with a few camp equipments, we left home for the end of the Union Pacific Railroad, which was then between the towns of North Platte and Julesburg. At the end of the first day's journey we pitched our camp near the junction of Big Sandy Creek and Little Blue River. The next morning, while preparing for the day's journey, an antelope saw our camp, and came up within a few rods of us to satisfy his curiosity. I took up my gun, and carelessly fired, and, notwithstanding it was within a very few rods of us, I missed the antelope altogether, and away it bounded from our sight.

After two or three days' journey, we fell in company with an emigrant train, and traveled with it for several days, thus finding company and protection from the Indians. Traveling up the Little Blue River, along the line of the Indian massacre of 1864, we felt that we were again venturing on dangerous ground. Following the stream as far as Pawnee Ranch—where we had been attacked and met so much trouble, as previously noticed—we crossed over the ridge

to the Great Platte River, without molestation or even seeing an Indian. On reaching a place called Doby Town, we heard that the Indians farther West were murdering the emigrants along the road. Remembering our former trouble with them, we were somewhat startled by the rumors, but pushed on to Fort Kearney, where we heard flying reports of horrible massacres farther west on the road. At first we thought of returning home, but were not well pleased with the idea of being intimidated by the red-skins. Remaining at the fort a few days for further developments, we were credibly informed that the savages were murdering the people along the road in various places. We were now in a quandary as to our further actions, thinking that to turn back would show cowardice, but to go on was not altogether safe.

A man who was at the fort with a large freight-train concluded to go on, and insisted on our going with him. Notwithstanding the unfavorable rumors that continued to come to us, we determined to accompany the freight-train and face the music. So, leaving the fort, we again traveled toward the setting sun, keep-

ing a sharp lookout for the Indians, whom we expected to pounce down upon us from the hills. How men will risk their lives for the sake of making a few dollars, or because they do n't wish to be defeated in their purposes! We thus exposed ourselves to the torture of the savages for the mere prospect of making a few dollars. I have often asked myself why men will do just what I have done myself.

After a few days' drive up the river from Kearney, we found the Indians, or rather they found us. One bright, beautiful day—such a day as some of the ladies would call “just lovely”—we camped by the roadside to refresh ourselves and teams. After caring for the teams, Mrs. Wells and I were walking out from camp, gathering fagots for a fire to prepare our dinner, when suddenly we heard the cry, “Indians in the hills!” Forgetting that we were after fuel, we made a forced march to camp. Had we wandered far from the train, undoubtedly the Indians would have captured us; for they were watching for just such an opportunity. Some one had chanced to look toward the hills and saw the Indians peeping over them,

awaiting a favorable opportunity to dash down upon us and capture the entire outfit, which they would have done had we been altogether off our guard. Richard had but that moment come from a spot near which the Indians were first seen. He had been shooting at an antelope there, and they could have cut him off from the camp had they seen him. Our men were all called into camp at the first alarm, and we set to work fortifying against any attack that might be made. The freight-wagons were mostly loaded with shelled corn in sacks, which were taken out and piled around the camp, affording breastworks through which a ball could not penetrate. This was sufficient protection from an assault on either side, and would have enabled us to hold the position against four times our number. Probably we could have repulsed several hundred of the bloodthirsty fiends had they seen fit to give us a trial, for there were about forty well-armed men inside the fortification.

After the breastworks were complete, and other things well arranged, some of the men walked out in plain view, and by waving their

hats invited the bloodsuckers to come on; we were ready for them. A few of the Indians rode out on the flat in open field, but dared not come within gunshot. Those who showed themselves were dressed in soldiers' uniform. How they came by these clothes we never knew; but I would as soon believe that they were the so-called friendly Indians, who were then enlisted as Government soldiers for the protection of the whites in that country, as that they were wild Cheyennes; and I would as quickly risk my life among the wild Indians as among the Indian soldiers on the plains.

Shortly after these Indians rode out in plain view of us, they all disappeared in the hills. Keeping a sharp lookout for them, believing that they might make a charge upon us, we soon saw them streaming from the hills upon another freight-train in camp about three miles down the river. In less time than it takes to write it, they reached that camp, and ran off the stock, leaving the men there nothing with which to move their wagons.

While still running, the Indians fired upon the train-men, who were under the wagons play-

ing cards, and had seen nothing of them until they began shooting and yelling. I have often thought that was a dear game of cards; for if the players had been on the lookout, as we were, in all probability they would not have been molested. So much for card-playing.

After frightening the stock from the wagons, the Indians drove them into the hills. Then we saw them dash upon a ranch still farther down the road, and drive off all the stock from that place.

Within the few minutes we were witnessing this, thousands of dollars' worth of cattle and horses were driven into the hills, leaving the people without means of moving from the country. We have never learned what became of the loaded wagons by the roadside; but undoubtedly when the men left, as they would have to do, the Indians came back and destroyed them.

After guarding ourselves and effects for a few hours, we reloaded the wagons with our fortifications, and traveled on without further molestation that day. By driving until late in the evening, we reached Plum Creek, where we

camped. There were a goodly number of ranchmen at Plum Creek, and we thought that, by uniting our forces, we would be quite safe for the night. After supper a guard was stationed around the camp, and, believing that all would be well, we retired, and slept soundly until morning. On looking out the next morning, we discovered that one of our ponies was gone from the lariat-rope to which it had been tied. Thinking that it had broken the rope, we searched for it, and found traces of an Indian who had crawled up in the grass, cut the rope, and led the pony away. It had been tethered so near that it could almost reach the wagon in which we were sleeping, and yet it was taken without disturbing us. On finding our pony gone, we learned that other horses had been taken from the barn at the ranch. This would not have happened had the guard done their duty. Instead of watching as they were instructed, as soon as all in the camp were asleep they abandoned their post, and slept until morning, thus giving the Indians the entire advantage of us. They could have come into the camp, and murdered every

man and woman before we hardly knew of their presence.

Here I was, with my wife and our few camping equipments, with no way to go on or return. But our greatest anxiety at this time was our own safety. Believing that there would be some way to get out of this, we did not despair, though we had no hope of ever seeing our stolen pony again. After taking breakfast and completing the morning work about the camp, Mrs. Wells and I walked down to the ranch, not more than two hundred yards from our outfit, to inquire for more news of the theft during the night. We had been in the house but a few moments when some one cried, "Indians are coming!" On looking out, we saw that they were trying to steal all the horses from the camp, and run them off into the hills. Seizing my gun, which I had with me, and taking Mrs. Wells by the hand, we for once tried our speed in running to the camp; and it was not a slow race either; there were several men engaged in it, some of whom we passed in spite of their efforts to keep pace with the flying crowd, and

we were among the first to reach the wagons. On reaching the camp, one big fat man, whom we had left behind, came up, puffing and blowing like an engine, and saying, "I was so scared that that woman outran me." Mrs. Wells was an unusually stout and active woman; she could lift as much as a man, and run like a deer; and, having courage and bravery combined with her strength and activity, she was well fitted for just such a race.

When my wife was safely inside the corralled wagons, my brother and I ran out to head off the Indians as they were passing by with the horses. A short distance from our camp were some old, vacated sod buildings, which we reached, and then concealed ourselves, thinking the Indians might come within gunshot of the place, not knowing we were there.

Circling around and around with the horses, it seemed that they would come near us. But we soon saw they were not coming within range of our guns; so we left our hiding-place, and, running out into the open prairie, fired on them as they ran. One fellow went flying past on a very fleet horse, and we fired several shots at

him. He was so far away, and running with such speed, that, as near as we could judge, he was only frightened, and ran still faster; but some of the men at the camp, who were looking on, said one of the balls from my gun had struck him. We could never learn whether this was true, as the last we saw of him he was still on his pony. At the report of our guns when first fired, he gave a tremendous yell, and threw himself down on the opposite side of the horse. When he straightened up, we gave him another round, and again he threw himself on the pony's side. This maneuver was repeated until he was out of our reach. We supposed that his yelling at the first report of our gun was to warn the other Indians; for at the sound of his voice they turned away and kept entirely out of reach of our guns. But he was a wonderfully frightened redskin. Lookers on at the camp said that our balls lifted the dust on every side of him, and the flying dust on the farther side showed that the last ball from my gun had passed over his pony's back just behind him. They also said that every time we fired he would throw himself down by the side of his horse, and fire his revolver at us

under his horse's neck; we were too busy sending lead after him to notice all this. I have since thought that if my brother had been in possession of my gun at the time, he would have at least brought the Indian's horse to the ground; for he was one of the best shots with a rifle at anything on the run that I ever saw. His gun failed to throw far enough to reach the Indian, but by elevating mine a little, it would carry to him every time.

Notwithstanding the well-directed efforts of the men at camp, the Indians drove off the horses belonging to the entire outfit, excepting one pony, which, as luck would have it, had been tied close to the wagons. The Indians succeeded in getting the horses, because of our herding them a short distance from the camp. They came upon them from the bluff, yelling and shooting at our men, and scaring the horses until they were so wild with panic that they fled to the hills, where they were followed by the Indians. They learned that all they need do to take the white man's horses was to run in among them and yell. The horses would run away with fright, and the Indians followed them until they

were tired of running, when they would surround and capture them. We were not the only ones without teams; all those who had horse-teams lost them, and there were a goodly number of us together with no prospects of leaving soon. Those with ox-teams were in the right condition to leave, but did not move that day, as they wished to wait further developments before venturing upon the road. The reader may be sure that we felt we were in a close place, being so far from home without money or team; but we did not despair. We had hopes of getting away safely, but how we could not imagine. We knew there was one way if the Indians were not too numerous on the road. We were good travelers, and used to going on foot, and, if we could do no better, Mrs. Wells could ride the pony, and we could soon foot it out of that country, even if we had to travel under cover of the night. The following night passed without further disturbance, and next morning came, with its bright effulgent rays streaming abroad as though nothing unusual had transpired. Soon after breakfast, a number of horsemen were seen coming up the road toward us, riding

as fast as their horses could go. We took them to be Indians, and, amid great excitement in camp, in a few moments all hands were armed, ready for the fray. As they seemed to be keeping the road, some of us crept out into the weeds by the roadside, to surprise them before they should reach the camp. But we soon discovered that they were white men, who, by their manner of riding, led us to believe the Indians must be in pursuit of them; so we still expected an attack by the savages. When the horsemen arrived, we learned that they had come to see whether we were all murdered, or needed assistance. They hitched their ponies to the hitching-rack by the ranch, and went into the house. My brother approached the foaming, panting horses, and was surprised to recognize our stolen pony as one of the number. On inquiring of the men where they had found the animal, they said that, early in the morning, it was noticed coming out of the hills, dragging a long rope that was tied to its neck. We informed them that the pony was ours, and how we had lost it. They seemed gruff, and not disposed to recognize our claim. There were five of

them, rough, wicked, and well-armed ranchmen, and gave us to understand at once that we could not have the pony, for they would not give it up under any consideration. As we were in a locality where might makes right, we hardly knew what to do. There was no law in the country, and we could not expect justice from that source. After telling the trainmen how we had found our pony, and that the men having it in their possession were determined not to give it up, they said, "There is your pony; go and take it, and we will stand by you." So we went for it; and, while Richard was taking off the saddle, I unhitched the horse from the post, and led it away. Just then the men came out of the house, armed to the teeth; but, on seeing the trainboys gathering around us like bees, they quieted down, saying if the horse was really ours they did n't want it, and let us have it without further trouble. I could not but think how friendly and kind some men are when compelled to be so. We were jubilant. Our stolen pony, which we had no hopes of seeing again, seemed to be miraculously restored to us. We now felt that we could either go home or move still far-

ther into the country of death and destruction, and finally determined on the latter course. The secret of our pony's return to us is: it was a chronic buckner, and had spells when it would allow no man to ride it. We supposed that the Indian, after running the horse into the hills, had mounted its back, when, one of those bucking spells coming on, it tossed Mr. Indian into the grass, and ran back to the road, where it was taken up by the white men. It was fortunate for us, however, that the pony bucked with the Indian, but allowed the white man to ride it. So much for a bucking pony.

The following morning, with the ox-train, we moved on still farther into the Indian country, leaving those behind who had lost their horses at the ranch, and of them we have heard nothing to this day. Traveling westward, we kept a sharp lookout for marauding bands of Indians, who might sally from the hills at any moment. If I mistake not, it was the second day after leaving Plum Creek, while we were in camp at noon, that we saw Indian heads rise above the hill not far away, the redskins apparently watching our movements about the

camp. As we were carefully guarded and well-prepared for defense, and thinking they dared not attack us unless they caught us off guard, we hooked up our teams and moved on. Meanwhile the men, with guns in their hands, walked between the wagons and the bluffs where the Indians had been seen. After going about a mile from the camping-place, we saw hundreds of horsemen coming from the hills, whom we thought to be wild Indians, and, as they were so numerous, we doubted not they intended to seize our entire outfit. On first seeing them we did not pause in our journey, but they continued to come in greater numbers, until the whole country seemed black with Indians. Though under extreme excitement, we succeeded in corralling the wagons, and prepared to sell our lives as dearly as possible. When we were altogether ready for what we supposed to be our last struggle for life, and determined that many of the enemy should fall before we were captured, lo and behold! Government wagons were seen emerging from the hills, and we at once understood that the horsemen were Government soldiers. From them we learned that

the Indians we saw looking over the hills were General Custer's Indian guides, and the hundreds of horsemen we were preparing to fight was Custer's regiment of a thousand men.

Surely there was some rejoicing in camp about that time. What a change came over our feelings! One moment we saw the Indians in the hills, but had no particular fear; another moment we expected to be dashed into eternity, and then saw there was no danger. The man who has had no such experience has but a faint idea of our feelings under the trying circumstances.

When we went into camp that night, Custer's entire command camped not far away. In a short time afterward five big Sioux Indians came out of the hills close by, claiming to be friendly, and wanted something to eat. Our train-men, having been so much annoyed by the Indians along the road, were determined to give these fellows' carcasses to the buzzards before the next morning. Somehow they got wind of it, and appealed to General Custer for protection. He fed and kept them over night, and in the morning sent them on their way re-

joining. At different places on the road at this time the old Indians, squaws, and children were put in care of the Government. They claimed to be friendly, that they might be protected and fed, while at the same time the warriors were on the warpath, killing all the whites of whom they could obtain any advantage. And when the warriors were tired of killing the whites, and began to get hungry, they would leave their hiding-places, claim to be friendly, get something to eat from the Government, and return to the slaughtering of the white men as before. A good way to carry on a successful war! And yet a great many cry, "O, the abused Indian!"

It may be asked, How do we know these statements to be true? By closely observing the movements of the Indians all along the line of the road, we saw that their actions indicated such treachery. Then, besides, General Custer's Indian guides told our men that they knew the five Sioux who came from the hills, as mentioned above, had been engaged in a bloody massacre of the whites on the Santa Fé road but a short time before.

Now we renewed our journey up the Platte

River, going as far as old Fort Cottonwood, where we intended to cross to the north side. Usually the Platte at this place was easily forded, but at this time its banks were full, and the crossing was difficult. There was no ferryboat here; but cross we must in some way, for we dare not remain on this side exposed to the savages. Some of the ranchmen had a small boat that would carry five or six men at a time, and this was our only chance for crossing the wild, rapid, and angry stream. We were compelled to take the wagons to pieces and carry part of them over at a time. After the wagons and their loads were over, the oxen were driven across by men hanging to their tails, and swimming after them; and the horses were made to swim alongside the boat, some of the men leading them by the halter, while others rowed. The river was about half a mile wide, and we were required to make three trips in order to carry one wagon over. First the bed was taken over; then half of the running-gears at each of the other trips. After about three days' hard work, we had all, bag and baggage, reached the north

side of the river, and were ready for our western march.

Passing up the line of the railroad, we occasionally saw the body of some poor fellow who had been murdered by the Indians, and left at the wayside. At one place we found a man who had been shot while upon a telegraph-pole repairing the wire. The Indians had watched him until he was upon the pole, with no chance to defend himself, then ran under him, shot him down, and cruelly mangled his body. Possibly he knew nothing of their presence until he was shot. At another place we found a man lying dead in his wagon-bed, the running-gears having been taken away. His body was almost decomposed and destroyed by vermin. I presume these men had left dear ones and homes in the East, that they might earn a few dollars for the necessities of life; and in all probability their friends will never know what has become of them until eternity reveals the secret things of time.

Journeying on as far as North Platte, we stopped there and inquired for work. After

looking about for a few days, we sold our team, the horses being too light for work on the grade, and took the train for Julesburg, determined to work with our hands alone. After riding on the construction-train most of the night, at daylight we reached the end of the road, which was then within three miles of Julesburg, and a man was employed to take us on to the town. Here we inquired for work, and found there was plenty to do, and that wages were high. But, like most people, we were anxious to know what would pay best for our time and labor.

We had been here but a short time when we learned that there was a great demand for some one to do the washing of clothes, and the people were willing to pay almost any price for such work. So Mrs. Wells and I opened a laundry in a tent, and set to work with a will to make something. My brother went farther west into the Black Hills, leaving us alone in a wild country, and in a tent on the outskirts of the town.

Though the country was wild and the people very wicked, we had no fear of Indians; for there were hundreds of men along the line of the road. When the people learned that a laun-

dry had been started, they brought us all the work we could possibly do, notwithstanding the enormous prices we charged. We demanded whatever our conscience would allow, and our conscience was exceedingly liberal at this time, but no one complained. The rule there was to ask for anything you thought you could get. Our price for washing small articles, such as socks, handkerchiefs, etc., was ten cents apiece, twenty-five cents each for colored or flannel shirts, and fifty cents for white shirts. I remember washing and ironing for one party goods which I carried home in my arms that brought us eleven dollars. This, to the reader, may seem unreasonable; but in order to make good wages we were compelled to charge high prices for our work. Our wash-water cost us a dollar a barrel, and other things in proportion; so these unreasonable prices for our work were only seemingly so. Besides, we thought we ought to have a little extra pay on account of the numerous insects we were at times compelled to wash with the clothes that were brought to us.

After we had spent one month at this kind

of work, a railroad contractor at a distant camp offered us a hundred and fifty dollars a month and board to cook for his outfit of about a hundred men. We accepted his offer, counted our money, and found that we had, in one month, made one hundred and thirty dollars clear of expenses. During the entire month we must have taken in at least two hundred dollars for washing and ironing garments alone. I presume that we would have saved more money had we continued at this business all summer; but working over the hot steam in warm weather was injuring our eyes, and we thought best to abandon it and go at something else.

Again we packed our few things, boarded the train, and moved still farther west, riding on a flat-car in the open air. On these freight-cars we were not only exposed to the wind and dust, but to the smoke and fire from the engine. The few things we carried along had been thrown on the car behind the engine, and took fire while on our way, and came near burning up. The flying sparks caught in the dress Mrs. Wells was wearing, and with much difficulty we were able to keep it from burning her. If we knew

no better than to ride on an open car next to the engine, the train-men should have warned us that we were there liable to be burned up; but after this ride we needed no warning.

While making this run on the new road, the engine gave us a flying ride after an antelope. As we were puffing along at a good rate, an antelope was seen about a mile in advance of the train, speeding along the road, and the engine gave chase. The antelope was near the track, but dared not cross. On the other side of it, off the road, graders were camped, and the animal feared to turn either way, being shy of the shining rails on the one side, and the campers on the other. After running about two miles, the engine began to overtake the frightened animal, which seemed to be fast failing in speed. About three miles further on, the panting creature was overtaken, and the engine slowed up to give the men a chance to shoot at it, when it ventured to cross the road immediately in front of the cow-catcher, and escaped. This was one of the most amusing races I ever witnessed. If the antelope had not tired, but gained strength and activity as did the engine, it would have

gotten away sooner. What a wonderful thing is the iron horse! It draws a wonderful load, runs fast, and never tires.

Going into camp among the graders on the railroad, we turned our hands to cooking among and for a very rough set of men. Those who know me now would smile to see me engaged as I was then,—mixing at once about fifty pounds of flour in a wash-tub, and repeating this every day in the week. The mixing and kneading the dough was too heavy work for a woman, and it fell to my lot. Besides this, there was the general work, which kept us both busy early and late. Usually we were engaged washing dishes until after nine o'clock at night, and sometimes until after ten. As we kept a general supply of everything, there was much to do, and plenty of material to do it with. There was bread, pie, cake, and pudding to bake, all of which I had a hand in preparing. As my mother had trained me to do housework at home, it was not altogether new to me. I learned by experience that a woman's work is not an easy task, as some seem to think; and I am sure I would rather fol-

low a plow an hour than stand by the table and wash dishes the same length of time.

After cooking for this grading outfit for about two months, we bought a small mule-team and went to work for ourselves. Not being at all pleased with the company we were compelled to be with while on the road, we left, and went to burning lime in the Black Hills with my brother, whom we had again fallen in with. Pitching our tent in a deep cañon among the hills, we began work on our "own hook." Here we found the best quality of limestone it was ever my lot to handle, and we burned and sold it for one dollar a bushel. By careful management, we made good wages at this work; but our hired help, which we thought necessary, was so costly that it took away much of the profits of our lime, though we did well while working at it. In this locality the whole surface of the hill was covered with hard blue limestone of the best quality, and from five to fifteen feet thick. The railroad graders, in making a cut not far from our camp, went through this solid stone where it was some twelve or fifteen feet thick,

and we could get stone of all sizes which they had blasted and lifted aside.

Burning lime did not suit us altogether, for there was more or less Sunday work to be done, though we avoided it most of the time. The necessary fuel could be drawn during the week, but by mistake at one time we drew wood on Sunday. During the week we had been busily engaged drawing wood and burning lime, preparing for Sunday. On Saturday as we supposed it was, our hired men did n't go to work as usual, and on our asking why, they said, "We wish to rest to-day and wash our clothes." We failed to take the hint that it was Sunday, told them "all right," hitched up our teams, and went after wood. Reaching the railroad, we saw no one at work there, and wondered what it meant. After we had loaded our wagons, and were returning home, we saw that the graders were still lying around the camp idle, and all at once it flashed into our minds that this was Sunday. Then we saw how dull of apprehension we were.

There were other objections against our remaining here. One of the greatest was that it

was no place for a woman to live. There were but few women, and most of them were of the "baser sort." There were good, nice women among the graders on the road, of course; but these we scarcely ever saw. Another thing, there was no religious society in all the country, and the time spent here was worse than thrown away, so far as religion is concerned. Again, a man was in danger of losing his life at any moment, either by the Indians, who might shoot him for his scalp, or by some white man who would kill him for his money. Of all the rough, wicked places in the world, this was the worst I ever saw. It was nothing uncommon to see a man shot down for the most trifling offense. It was so common a thing, indeed, that the boys said, "We have a man for breakfast every morning." As there was no law, guns usually settled all disputes and difficulties. The man or woman who has been in no such place, has but little idea how low and inhuman some men and women become when not under the restraint of law. One night, while we were eating supper, a number of intelligent-looking young men came to our camp and said, "We heard that there is a

man somewhere below here in the cañon who keeps women, and we thought perhaps you could tell us where to find him." I could only tell them I had heard of such a person, but knew nothing about him. O, how sad to think of those boys far away from the home where they had no doubt once lived under the influence of a pure mother and sisters, and now surrounded by directly the opposite, and led astray! How blessed to mothers that they can not always know what their boys are doing when from home!

One morning, while Mrs. Wells and I were alone, we were awakened by a drunken man coming into the tent. The first we knew of his presence he was standing by the bedside, his face all covered with blood, looking down into our faces. In his drunken spree some one had pounded him up most fearfully. As I always slept with my gun where I could lay hands on it at any moment, I reached for it, at the same time keeping my eyes on the intruder. My first impulse was to shoot him down on the spot, for I was very much frightened, till, at a second glance, I discovered that he was a drunken man;

but, with drawn gun, he was marched out of the tent. I suppose that some fellow had got him drunk, then beaten, and sent him away with an empty purse, as many others had been served before.

One day, about noon, as we were sitting in our tent, a man who had been robbed in this way came for something to eat. He said some one had invited him to take a social glass, which he did, and later awoke from unconsciousness, to find he had been robbed of all his money, and was now far from home and destitute. We were afterward informed by other parties that he was not a habitual drinker, but had been invited to drink, and was drugged and robbed, as he told us. If the man was not a habitual drinker, this was a good but severe lesson to him; at least a strong hint to let the vile stuff alone altogether.

We were also annoyed by the Indians, who were constantly doing mischief around us somewhere. One day, as Mrs. Wells and I were on our way from the hills to Cheyenne City, looking behind us we saw about thirty Indians. Though they were dressed in soldiers' uniforms,

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we knew not what they intended to do, nor who they were. As before stated, the Government kept a number of Pawnee Indian soldiers out here to guard the graders, but we were as suspicious of them as of the wild Indians; for they had been known to shoot white men whom they caught alone while hunting. There was little consolation, therefore, in encountering these Indian soldiers. On coming within about a half mile of us, they darted behind a ridge which ran parallel with the road for several miles, and disappeared from sight. Expecting them to follow behind the hills a short distance, and then come upon us, I took my trusty rifle in hand, ready to fire, keeping an eye upon the hills from which I thought they might emerge. At the same time I whipped up the mules, urging them to travel as for life, and prepared to begin shooting the Indians as soon as they were in easy range of my gun. Having a "Spencer carbine," with which I could throw seven balls without stopping to load, I could have brought a number of them down before they reached us. I knew that if they realized that I was ready and watching for them, they would not be so likely to venture

forth, for they would expect some of their number to get hurt. In this way we traveled several miles, but saw no more of them. I still think, however, that if I had been altogether off my guard they would have given us trouble. With the Indians, the murderers, horse-thieves, prostitutes, and drunkards, this country was a hell to live in. It was a good place to make money, and we did a satisfactory business; but I could not consent to stay there and throw myself away, just for the sake of making money. So we quit burning lime, and moved down to Cheyenne City, intending to start for home in a few weeks.

Not being quite ready to start for home when quitting the lime business, I left my wife in the city—which by this time had grown to be a good-sized place—and made a trip across the first chain of the Black Hills to the Laramie plains, taking a load of hardware for a ranchman, the freight of which brought me about fifteen dollars. The first night out we camped in a deep cañon in the hills, leaving our loaded wagons in the road on top of the hills. Having no tent with us, we camped on the ground in the open air, with the heavens for a covering, and

the hills for a shelter from the blast. It was October, and the winds were cold and piercing. Covering ourselves with good, warm blankets, we slept soundly until morning, when, on awaking, we found about three inches of snow on our bed, which had helped to keep us warm. Making the round trip without any trouble, I found Mrs. Wells waiting and anxious to be off for home, and we determined to start in a few days.

Before leaving, I must give a brief sketch of this wild country. Here are broad, high, and undulating prairies, stretching over thousands of acres, interspersed with beautiful streams of water. Here are high level lands, decorated with thousands of native flowers, the most profuse of which is the blooming cactus, growing so thickly over the ground that a dog could hardly pass through because of the long, sharp thorns which, when in bloom, are lovely to behold. The grass at this time of the year is very short and dry; but it is so wonderfully nutritious that it keeps the cattle in good condition all the year round. The soil is sufficiently rich to produce an abundant harvest of corn or wheat if

properly supplied with moisture; because of the dry weather few things will grow without irrigation. There are cool streams of water flowing through this parched land, that are very inviting to the weary and thirsty traveler. At many places in the mountains crystal springs may be seen gurgling from the rocks, affording a refreshing draught at every season of the year. Near our limekiln was a high ledge of rock, from which we could look down into a little, clear, rippling stream, more than a hundred feet below, as it dashed down the mountain on its errand of mercy somewhere in the valley far away. This bright waterfall burst from a rock not more than two hundred yards above our camp. Some of these streams go leaping from rocks in the mountain side, hurry on a short distance over the surface, then plunge into the earth, only to burst into a fountain of water from a rock in another place. Thus they creep on their way, to water the brier and the thorn by their sides, and slake the thirst of the withering flower that sips from their fountains.

On the mountains the scenery is picturesque, enchantingly beautiful, and wondrous to behold.

Climbing far up among the craggy hills, you can look down in the valley, thousands of feet below, where grow the ripening berries, and where hundreds of flowers are blooming in the warm sunshine. Then turning your eyes to the west, you behold the snow-covered mountain ranges, presenting the appearance of midwinter. Some of these snow-covered mountains are seventy-five or a hundred miles away, though, when they first loomed up in front of us, as we went toward the hills, they appeared to be not more than fifteen miles distant. Turning in another direction, in the distance may be seen scores of mountains proudly lifting their lofty peaks far above the hills around them, presenting the appearance of a large stackyard of wheat, where the stacks are round and run up to a sharp point.

As you stand gazing at this scene, possibly you may discover an approaching rain-cloud, and, as it draws near, it may seem to be on a level with you—neither higher nor lower—but as it settles in the mountains, you look far down below, and there the dark cloud hangs and is emptied into the valley. Beneath your feet are

lightnings and thunder, but cast your eyes to the sky above, and not a cloud is to be seen.

Here are rocks of all forms and sizes—some in their formative state, while others are fast crumbling and falling to pieces. I have seen rocks, once large and standing far above the surface of the earth, that have crumbled and fallen off on the outside to such an extent that, in the distance, they had the appearance of large men standing among the other rocks.

The above pictures are not imaginary, but such as I have witnessed with my own eyes.

To return to my story. It was now late in the season, and we were about five hundred miles from home, with cold weather coming on. But we must go, though it was no small undertaking to make such a trip with a team, especially in cold weather. Having nothing but our camping outfit to carry, we put a small sheet-iron stove in the wagon, that we might have fire all the time, if necessary; then Mrs. Wells and I turned our faces homeward, leaving Richard in the Black Hills. Finding an outfit of ten or fifteen men going our way, we felt quite safe in

traveling; for by this time the Indians had ceased hostilities on the line of the railroad. Gathering bark and chips for fuel as we passed along, we were enabled to keep warm both night and day. Mrs. Wells frequently prepared the meals while traveling, and when the outfit stopped at noon we had our dinner ready. I shot a duck one forenoon; it was dressed and cooked while on the march, and ready for our dinner by noon. One day, while traveling some distance in advance of the other wagons, we saw a group of antelopes a few hundred yards away. As there were no prospects of getting any nearer, I fired into them, hardly expecting to hit one; but at the crack of the gun one fell to the ground. It was a pop-shot, as we called it; for I aimed at no particular one, but fired at the bunch as they stood together. Strapping our game behind the wagon, we went on, with meat enough to last the company several days. All the way east the weather was pleasant and the roads good, and our homeward march a delightful trip. During the trip there was some freezing weather, but being comfortably housed in our wagon, it did not inconvenience us. We reached home in

good spirits, exceedingly glad to have left the dark shadows of an uncivilized country, once more to sit in the sunshine of a civilized community. We were absent from home about six months, all of which time we lived in our wagon and tent, and were inside of a house but a few times during our absence.

After returning from our Western trip, we took a homestead on an eighty-acre piece of land in Jefferson County, on Cub Creek, and bought forty acres adjoining, which gave us a nice start in the world. As there was no house on the place, the first thought was to build one. Having no money for the purpose, the work must be done with my own hands, and the house must be built of the native material growing on the land. A sufficient number of logs were cut and drawn together on the building spot. The body of the house was composed of round logs, laid up and notched together, forming a building about six feet high and eighteen feet square. After the body of the house was up, it was left for a short time unfinished. On returning to complete the job, I found that the prairie-fire had broken out in the neighborhood, and burned

the foundation logs so much as to ruin them for further use. A few new logs were secured, and, all alone, so far as human help was concerned, I took down that house and rebuilt it in one day, though the logs were so heavy that it would have taken at least six men to carry them. This is the way I did it: Getting two long poles (skids), and laying one end of them on the logs that were in place for the body of the house, and the other end on the ground, a way was made for rolling the logs to their place one at a time. To put them in the right position was impossible for one man by main strength alone. Bringing my team into service, it did the lifting of those heavy timbers. The team was put on the side of the foundation opposite the log to be rolled up, a long rope was wound around the log several times; then the team was hitched to the end of the rope, and made to roll the log where I wanted it. After the body of the house was up, then came the roof, which was made of poles, straw, and dirt. The cracks between the logs composing the body of the house were first filled with chinking, and then daubed with clay from the natural soil. A rough floor

of native lumber was laid, giving us quite a comfortable house. At least we thought so at that time.

The reader may want to know something of our furniture. Soon after we were married, one of the neighboring women asked some of our friends in what city we intended to buy our furniture. I thought, "Furniture? We need nothing of the kind. A few boards for a table, a few poles for a bedstead, and a couple of nail-kegs to sit on, is all the furniture needed in such a happy home as ours." Just as well ask a millionaire what sod-house he is going to occupy as to ask a backwoodsman where he is going to buy his furniture.

During the summer of 1869, Mrs. Wells's health suddenly began to give way, and it was plain to be seen that she was being hurried to the grave by that dreadful disease, quick consumption. As the flower is withered by the deadly stroke of the untimely frost, so this once strong and active woman was fast withering beneath the stroke of the dire disease. We did all in our power to arrest it; but on it swept, like an angry wave, and her health rapidly declined.

From the first the doctors seemed to cherish but little hope of her recovery; but it hardly seemed possible that she could be taken from us so soon. She thought that, in her dreams, she was warned that death was not far away. As she related to me her night visions, she seemed to think that they were messages from God, that she might know of her early departure from this world; therefore she was not surprised when the summons came.

On the twentieth day of December, 1869, she grew much worse, and realized that her time on earth was numbered by hours only. We at once called her friends to her bedside to bid her farewell ere she crossed the stream of death. She was perfectly rational to the last, told of her prospects, that all was well; then said to me, "Take the babe and raise her yourself, and teach her to read the Bible, which is best of all." After giving instructions about the baby she requested some one to sing. During the singing, she raised her hands and praised the Lord. Soon after the singing ceased, she closed her eyes on earth to open them in heaven. On the 21st of December, 1869, her happy soul quietly fell

asleep in Jesus, leaving me with a motherless child about twenty-one months old. O what a blow to my earthly prospects! In this hour I could only look to the Lord for help and comfort.

My cherished hopes are now all gone;
My bosom friend hath flown,
To find and wear her golden crown,
And left me all alone.
No, not alone; my babe is here—
No mother's love to know,
And I must live its heart to cheer
While struggling here below.

No one knows the sorrow of a heart thus smitten but he who has tasted of the bitter cup. Among the most heartrending scenes in all my life is that of little children left without a mother; and yet, in the course of nature, these things must be.

CHAPTER VIII

FRONTIER WORK IN THE MINISTRY—CALL TO THE MINISTRY
—MY FIRST APPOINTMENT—REMOVED TO RED CLOUD
—MY FIRST TRIP TO RED CLOUD—ORGANIZATION OF THE
FIRST CLASS ON THE RED CLOUD CIRCUIT—MOVING TO
RED CLOUD—CAMP UNDER A BUSH, AND PULL GRASS FOR
A BED—EXPERIENCE ON THE CHARGE.

FROM boyhood to mature age I felt a Divine call to the ministry. Try as I would to get rid of that impression, it never left me. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" ever sounded in my ears, night and day. When I tried to shake off the responsibility, I felt that to yield was to be saved, to refuse was to be lost. So, after years of delay, I yielded, and entered the work some time in the winter of 1857. When I was seventeen years of age the Methodist Episcopal Church gave me an exhorter's license. In that capacity some work was done for the Church, but, failing to enter the open doors which were continually inviting me, very little was accomplished for the Master.

In the year 1867, at the age of twenty-seven,

in a little town by the name of Blue Springs, which is located on the Blue River, in what was then Beatrice Circuit, Nebraska City District, Nebraska Conference, I was granted a local preacher's license. After this I did considerable preaching in different localities, traveling on foot six and seven miles through the dust, and under a scorching sun, to my appointments. Yet that failed to relieve my mind, for I still felt that all my time should be given to the ministry.

In the spring of 1871 my case was submitted to the Quarterly Conference, and I was recommended to the Annual Conference for admission on trial. At the session of the Nebraska Annual Conference my name was placed among those admitted on trial, and I was sent to the Fairbury Circuit. Having now entered the regular work, I must have clothes, books, and a horse, and the only way I could contrive to get them was to sell my land. All the land I owned was sold for five hundred dollars, and spent in preparing for the work of the ministry. After purchasing a horse and some of the necessary books, I moved upon my charge, leaving my child with her grandmother. Finding a boarding-place in the home

of Brother M. Hurlbert, I went to work with considerable zeal and hopefulness. On coming to this work I was a stranger in a strange country, and had much trouble in finding my appointments as well as the membership. Starting early one Sunday morning to one of my preaching-places several miles away, the wrong road was taken, which led me far out of the way, and I was late in reaching the place. The congregation assembled, and anxiously awaited the coming of the new preacher until past the hour for services. Thinking that I would not be there, they started for home, most of them on the same road. When within about a mile of the schoolhouse where I was to preach, I met the congregation going home. Halting them, and making myself known, I told them that if they would stop by the roadside we would have services. Fortunately we met where a number of hewed logs had been drawn together for the purpose of erecting a house. Requesting my strange audience to be seated on the logs, I preached the gospel to them by the roadside. At the close of the service the congregation took the road home, and I went on to my next appointment.

At this time Fairbury Circuit consisted of Fairbury, Steel City, Rock Creek, Rose Creek, and Hurlbert appointments. Providing myself with a pair of old-fashioned saddlebags, I traveled this large circuit on horseback. At one point on the charge I was not well received, which caused me great sorrow of heart. The brethren at this place had requested the presiding elder to send them a married man, and I was now single. Besides, I was a boy in the work, and but recently from the farm. The three combined faults were very hard for some of them to endure even for one year.

Notwithstanding the opposition which I met at some of the points, success crowned my feeble efforts as long as I remained on the charge. Time to me, now, was very precious. My Conference studies were to be brought up, and studies in the common branches of the English language were continued. I could carry on my reading and study only in leisure hours at home, or while riding from house to house in pastoral work and from one appointment to another. There being no church building of any kind on the entire charge at that time, our meetings were

held in sod-houses, dug-outs, and small frame schoolhouses, where a goodly number of the settlers gathered to hear the gospel and worship the Lord.

I soon learned that to succeed as a Methodist preacher in a new country I must have "get, grit, and grace," and that I must fear neither debt, dust, nor the devil, and the homes of the poor and destitute must be visited. The refined and cultured, too, must be won for Christ and the Church. This work demanded courage and determination, and was especially hard for one unused to facing the public, as I was at that time.

I worked on the charge in this way until some time in the summer at my second quarterly-meeting, when the brother who had been appointed pastor on the Republican Valley Circuit, including all of the Republican Valley in the State of Nebraska, came to me, and said, "I have been out on my work, and there is nothing there; and, besides, I do n't like to go where I have to use this," at the same time drawing a revolver from his pocket, and showing it to me. He came to our quarterly-meeting to see if the presiding elder would not give him another work. After

listening to his pitiful story, the presiding elder concluded to relieve him of his charge, and give him a part of mine, especially that part where they wanted a married man. To this I gladly consented, and for a short time we worked the Fairbury Circuit together.

Soon after the above-named quarterly-meeting, Brother Maxfield, our presiding elder, wrote me that there were Methodists at Red Cloud, in the Republican Valley, and he wanted a minister to look after them, adding, "There is no use sending Brother C., whom the Conference had assigned to that work. I want some one who has sand in his craw."

After duly considering the matter, I wrote him that I would volunteer to go. It was not long before an answer came to my letter, relieving me of the Fairbury Charge, and informing me that the presiding elder would be pleased to have me go to Red Cloud, see what was going on there, and, if possible, form a circuit throughout the valley. By this time I had provided myself with an old buggy, and was pretty well fixed for traveling. Persuading a young class-leader—A. L. Goss, deceased, who was afterward

admitted into Nebraska Conference on trial—to accompany me to the new field of labor, with horse, buggy, and camp equipage, we turned our faces toward Red Cloud. If failing to find a house where we could stay when overtaken by night, we camped by the roadside in the open air. I well remember camping one evening on a beautiful spot by the roadside, and of thinking what a nice night we should spend in such a comfortable place. We had been in bed but a short time when more than a thousand callers came, and with a thousand voices sang their evening song, all claiming blood relationship, which we soon realized to be true, for before they left us we knew that they were blood of our blood. If there is anything more annoying than the pesky mosquito when one is tired and sleepy, it must be either fleas or bedbugs. We fought our assailants until almost morning, when they retreated with their spoil, and left us in full possession of dreamland.

In the evening of the next day we reached Guide Rock, a little town in the Republican Valley, a few miles below Red Cloud, where we put up with a Mr. G., who was one of the leading

men of the place. When informed who we were and of our business, he seemed wonderfully surprised. I thought then, and still think, that he suspected we were rogues of some kind. Early the next day we reached Red Cloud, and the first man we met at this little town was ex-Governor Garber, who seemed pleased to know of our mission. Following his directions, we found a Methodist family some four or five miles from town. On visiting this family (F. E. Penny), and making ourselves known, we were received with joy and gladness. Here we spent the night, and learned of five Methodists in the community. Saturday, the following morning, we left an appointment at Brother Penny's house for Sunday morning service, and went on up the valley in search of other Methodist people. After traveling about five miles, we encountered a family who were encamped and taking dinner by the roadside. We called upon them, made ourselves known, learned they were Methodists, took dinner with them, and prayed and had a rejoicing time. Near where his tent stood, this good Methodist, Brother Knight, afterward built a house, in which I preached often for about eight-

een months. Here, too, we had Sunday-school, singing-school, and a Methodist hotel. Here was formed a little class, with Brother and Sister Knight at the head, who became leaders of all Church work in the community.

After our enjoyable dinner and a profitable season of prayer and praise in Brother Knight's tent, as before mentioned, we returned to Brother Penny's, near Red Cloud, where we had left the appointment for Sunday morning.

On Sunday morning I preached in Brother Penny's house, and formed a class of five; namely, F. E. Penny, Hattie Penny, John Penny, James Romine, and Elizabeth Romine. This was the first sermon preached in that section of country by a traveling minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the first class formed at Red Cloud or anywhere on what is now the Hastings District. The class was formed some time in the latter part of the summer of 1871.

On the following Monday morning, after little more than a week's absence, I started on my return trip, to remove my few effects to the new field of labor. I reached Fairbury, dusty, hungry, and tired, but well pleased with my trip.

After a few days' rest and preparation, my valuables were packed in a one-horse buggy, and I bid adieu to the people of Fairbury, and started back to the Red Cloud country. Traveling up Rose Creek, and crossing the ridge between the Little Blue and Republican Rivers, I found only one house after leaving the head-waters of Rose Creek, until reaching the Republican Valley, where I obtained lodging for the night with a family living in a dug-out. There was only one room in the house, which was used for sitting-room, kitchen, and bedroom. The husband was gone from home, leaving the mother alone with her little children; and yet I was made welcome and comfortable for the night. There were two beds in the room, with the foot-boards snug against each other. On one of these I slept, while the mother and her children occupied the other. Such is itinerating in a new country. Here were no hotels, but nearly every house afforded entertainment for the traveler. The next morning was a soul-cheering one, and with joy I went on my way up the Republican Valley. During the day a number of houses were passed. I think about noon I passed a place where peo-

ple were living. Traveling on until late in the afternoon, my horse began to show signs of weariness, and I looked about for a place of shelter; but seeing none, I continued my journey until late in the evening, when I decided to camp for the night. I stopped by a bush about four feet high, and, unhooking the horse from the buggy, I tethered him by the roadside. After making my horse as comfortable as possible, I began to prepare a place for myself. I set to work pulling grass, and piled it under the bush for a bed. After gathering a sufficient amount for this purpose, I stretched an umbrella over the bush, and retired to bed and to sleep. On the prairie, in the grass, and under a bush, my slumber was wholesome. The morning dawned bright and clear; but found me, as did the night, without food to stay the cravings of hunger. As the sun rose, I began my journey toward the west, earnestly looking for a house where my hunger might be satisfied. After going about ten miles, I found one, and of course was not turned away hungry, for such was seldom the manner of the early settlers. The reader may be sure that that was a relished meal. It was good,

wholesome food, highly flavored with about twenty hours of fasting.

Leaving my hospitable entertainers, I passed on to Guide Rock, and found lodging for the night. The following day I reached the house of Brother Penny, where I made my home.

Now came the tug of war with real frontier work in the ministry. For the first few months my time was principally spent in looking over the country for Christian people and for houses to preach in. Soon after reaching Red Cloud an appointment was made at Brother Penny's, about four miles southwest of town, and at Brother Knight's, some five miles from Red Cloud up the valley, and another one about eight miles southeast of town.

At the Penny appointment preaching was in Brother Penny's house, which was a log building, with a roof made of "shakes" split from the native oak-trees on his own place. Here I had a good preaching point during my entire pastorate on the charge. At Red Cloud I procured a vacant log building, which I occupied for a short time, then preached in Mr. Garber's store-room for a while; after this I moved into a dug-

out in the south part of town, which shall be noticed further on. At the Knight appointment I preached in Brother Knight's house, and, if I remember correctly, it was covered with poles and dirt, and had a floor of native soil. Here, as previously noticed, we sang, prayed, preached, ate, and slept, all in the same room, and had a glorious, good time. At the appointment southeast of Red Cloud we had preaching and Sunday-school in a dug-out in the bank of a creek, where we worshiped the Lord in the winter season, and in the summer we worshiped under the branches of two large oak-trees. Under these native trees I preached, held Sunday-school, and we made the woods and hills ring with our songs of praise and plain gospel sermons. I often wonder if the echo of my voice is not still heard in that new country. The many happy hours I spent among those warm-hearted early settlers in dug-outs and sod-houses, will never be forgotten. They will be held in sweet remembrance as long as I live.

The house where I boarded was about as good as the country afforded at that time, and yet it was a very uncomfortable place in cold,

stormy weather. Many times I have sat poring over my books while the snow sifted through the roof upon them, and I was compelled to throw something over my shoulders and sit in a stooping posture in order to keep my books from being soiled. Though the house was open to the cold, we could keep comfortably warm, for we were blessed with plenty of wood and a large fireplace. I say plenty of wood: there was plenty close by, but much of the time I carried it from the grove on my own shoulders. In cold weather, Brother Penny was usually on the road teaming, and left me to replenish the wood-pile without a team.

Another burden was imposed upon me. A good brother who lived a mile from my boarding place was compelled to leave home and find work, that he might provide bread for his family. While he was away, there came a heavy fall of snow. The weather grew exceedingly cold, and the fuel he had provided for his family was entirely consumed. As there was no other man near, it fell to my lot to replenish this brother's wood-pile also, and keep his family from freezing. He had drawn up a lot of ash-poles for

fencing, which I converted into stove-wood, and, on his return, he found his fencing had been burned to ashes.

There is a vast difference between acting the part of a city pastor and preaching on a large circuit in the frontier work. While the city pastor is sitting in his cozy study at home, the frontier preacher is perusing his books in a cold room, with the family of children about him, or traveling through the deep snow to meet his appointments, or to relieve the sick and destitute. Yet there is a glory in laying the foundation of our beloved Zion in a new country that many of our Eastern preachers know nothing of. I have no disposition to envy the comparatively easy lot of our Eastern brethren; but I do sympathize with them in their loss of the glory there is in laying the foundation of our Church in new fields, upon which others may build.

In all my travels on that large circuit at Red Cloud through the snow and cold, piercing winds of winter, I neither had an under-garment nor an overcoat. Being born a backwoodsman, I did not mind such things as one would who

had been used to the comforts of life. On this charge I had some difficulty in finding houses to preach in; for when first going to the place there were no schoolhouses in all the country; so I preached in private houses, hoping for the time when my congregation could have even a sod schoolhouse to worship in. Even in the town of Red Cloud I was compelled to resort to a little dug-out on the outskirts of the village, where we held a series of meetings which resulted in great good for the Master's cause. Let the pastors of the present-day beautiful churches in Red Cloud rejoice that they are so comfortably situated, and remember that the first pastor and his little flock in that now flourishing town preached, sang, and prayed in a small dug-out in the ground.

On first coming to this country, I found Indians, buffaloes, deer, antelopes, turkeys, thousands of prairie-dogs, and a few white men with their families. What a change has taken place in that country in so short a time! Then it was new, wild, and desolate; now it is a well-settled, rich, and fertile country, with schoolhouses and churches; and fine residences have taken the

place of the dug-out, the sod-house, and the log-cabin. The first winter I spent there, I killed twelve wild turkeys, two of which were shot from the window of my room. Besides these, Brother Penny killed some seven or eight. So you see the wild turkey took the place of the yellow-legged chicken. Then, occasionally, some one chanced to kill a deer or a buffalo, which went far toward supplying the table with meat the entire year.

During the winter we held a revival-meeting in our dug-out church, eight miles southeast of Red Cloud. Though worshiping under ground, there were many souls saved and made happy in the Lord, and there was a glorious awakening among the people of God. Truly the Lord is not confined to the large assemblies, the city-full, or the fine churches, but meets and blesses his people in the dug-out, the sod-house, and the log-cabin. O what a wonderful God is our God, who heareth the prayers of his people at all times and in all places!

In the spring of 1872 I finished my first year's work in the Conference and on the Red Cloud Circuit, and went to Conference to report my

charge. Traveling from Red Cloud to the seat of Conference, a distance of a hundred and fifty miles or more, through mud, rain, and cold, I reported as follows: Full members, 23; probationers, 6; received on salary from the circuit, \$32; from the Missionary Society, \$150—making \$182 for the year. The bishop returned me to the Red Cloud Circuit, where I spent another year of toil and hardship, worrying through the year about as I did the previous one. During the warm season I had a good and enjoyable time in traveling up and down the valley and across the prairie with my horse and buggy; but in the snow and severe winds of winter, being poorly clothed, I suffered intensely from the cold. During this year a class was formed at Guide Rock, which was made a regular preaching-point, though there were but few Methodists at the place or within reach of it. I now had five preaching-points on the charge, which gave me abundance of work.

In the summer of 1872 we held a camp-meeting southwest of Red Cloud, on what was called Penny Creek. Here we had a successful meeting, and received some fifteen into the

Church on probation, and the presiding elder, J. B. Maxfield, baptized a number of converts in the Republican River—the first Methodists baptized in that river in Nebraska.

During the week of our camp-meeting a heavy rainstorm visited the camp, saturating the ground to such a degree that it was unfit for use; so the presiding elder and I, with a few of the brethren, went on a buffalo-hunt. We hunted all day without seeing any game, and came home tired and hungry, as hunters usually do. But the elder and the brethren went out the second time, with better results. After hunting a few hours in the morning, they came upon their game, wounded a large male buffalo, and chased him for several miles. He ran until he could or would go no farther, and then seemed determined to defend himself. Halting not far from where two young men were in camp, he unmistakably showed signs of fight. On seeing that he would go no farther, one of the young men, taking his gun, walked out toward him. As he was approaching the beast, one of our men called to him not to go too close, or he might be hurt. Paying no atten-

tion to the warning, he went on, swearing that he would kill the animal. When within a few rods of the enraged beast, he presented his gun for firing; but the buffalo made a lunge for him, caught and crushed him to the ground, and threw him five or six feet into the air. As he came to the ground, the buffalo prepared for another attack, when one of our men shot the beast through the heart, killing him instantly. The young man was taken to his camp. Our men dressed the buffalo, and returned to the camp-ground with enough beef to supply every person there for more than a week. It was reported that the young man attacked by the buffalo died the day after being wounded. How carelessly and foolishly some men will rush into the jaws of death!

Our camp-meeting closed with the good results already mentioned, and every one went home greatly benefited by having attended. The presiding elder, J. B. Maxfield, and a family by the name of Hurlbert came to this camp-meeting from Fairbury, nearly eighty miles distant, in a covered wagon. Thus the reader can see something of the presiding elder's work and

what he passed through in the early days of Methodism in this new country. Brother Maxfield's district extended from somewhere east of Beatrice as far west as the Nebraska line, a distance of more than three hundred miles, though he was not required to go so far west; for as yet much of the country was unsettled.

On the Red Cloud Circuit, in my second year, the people were in very straitened circumstances, so that it was impossible to feed and clothe themselves comfortably. To add to their misfortunes, the grasshoppers came upon them by the millions, and destroyed their crops, and they were compelled to bring corn and flour to feed themselves and their teams seventy-five or a hundred miles on wagons; for as yet there were no railroads in this country. I well remember making more than one trip of the kind to get feed for my ponies. Early in the spring of 1872 a good brother and I went with two teams after corn for our horses. When we left home, there was a great deal of snow on the ground, the weather was cold, and the ground frozen hard. After loading up our corn and starting for home, the weather grew warm,

melting the snow, and filling the ravines and creeks with running water. There being no bridges, it was necessary to cross the streams by fording. One day, after wading through water and slush-snow until we were wet from head to foot, we came to a creek that was swollen so full that we dared not drive our teams into it. Here we were, the shades of night fast approaching, and no prospects of crossing the stream. Our only chance seemed to be to wait for the stream to fall; for with our loads it was impossible to go around it in either direction. At length, casting our eyes far up the stream, we saw a house, with signs of life. While I remained with the teams, my companion went in search of lodging for the night. In a short time he returned, accompanied by another man, who helped us move our loads to his house, and kept us until morning. When our teams were cared for, our host furnished each of us with a suit of dry clothes, and spared no pains to make us comfortable. So long as I retain my mind, I shall hold that dear family in sweet remembrance. Though I have forgotten their names, I shall not forget their kindness. They were

Danes, and lived in a large dug-out in the bank of the creek which had intercepted our journey. Though living in the ground, I never saw a more orderly and neatly-kept house than theirs. Everything was as neat and tidy as human hands could make it, and they seemed to enjoy life as well as if they had lived in the most splendid palace. The following night we were at home, with corn enough to feed our horses for several weeks.

Think of the wonderful development of this country! Only a few years ago the Methodist minister of that place traveled a hundred miles to obtain horse-feed, and now, from the same locality, thousands of bushels of grain are shipped over the railroads to the Eastern markets.

When the welcome warm days of spring arrived, they brought relief to many families who were suffering on account of the cold weather, and they brought great relief to me as well. With warm weather, the buffalo returned to our locality, bringing to us our summer's buffalo-meat. One day, while preparing my quarterly report to the Quarterly Conference, which

was to convene that day in my room, buffaloes were seen crossing the valley toward Brother Burtice's house, which was not far from Red Cloud, and where I was then making my home. Seeing there were young calves with them, and neighboring men after them with horses, I determined to engage in the wild chase once more. Hastily bridling my spirited horse, I gave a tremendous leap, intending to light on his back, but went clear over the horse to the ground on the other side. If the reader could see me now, he would think it strange that I could mount a horse at all; but people will change, as well as places. The second attempt to mount proved more successful, and I rode after the frightened buffaloes, intending to head them off and turn them from their course, when they disappeared behind a hill. Urging on my horse still faster, hoping to overtake and turn them, suddenly I met them coming toward me at full speed. When my horse saw the frightened animals, he stopped, sent me over his head in the direction of the buffaloes, then wheeled about, and ran home. Finding myself on the ground, I thought I was badly hurt, but soon found my

feet, and, with bridle in hand, I hurried home, with no serious injury from the fall and no further desire for chasing buffaloes. This is the only accident that ever happened to me in chasing the buffalo, and it was the last chase I ever engaged in.

During the year I received but little money; consequently my wardrobe was in great need of replenishing. The last white shirt was gone, and my colored ones were giving out. I had no money to purchase the needed clothing, and felt sure that none of the brethren were better off. It was near time for the meeting of Conference, and I knew not which way to turn. But notwithstanding my embarrassing circumstances, the work was continued as though I had all the necessities of life, both in meeting my appointments and making pastoral calls. On calling, one afternoon, at a brother's house, I drove into the yard, and found one of his neighbors talking with him. As I entered the yard, the neighbor went into the house, and asked the lady who I was, and, when told, sneaked off home, as we supposed, to hide. He soon returned, however, and, stepping up to me,

handed me a five-dollar bill, saying: "Here, take this; you need it worse than I do. You will make better use of it than I can. Besides, I have plenty more." It seemed that he was the only man in all that country who had any money, and the Lord touched his heart and moved him to give me the much-needed funds. With these five dollars and a three-dollar order on the store from one of the brethren, my wardrobe was so far replenished that I could go to Conference with some self-respect.

I must not leave without giving the reader a pen picture of a heart-rending sight that met my eyes while on this charge. At that time there were no bridges spanning the river, and the only way to cross with a team was by fording. One day, while on my way from home to town, I drove down into the edge of the water, and saw, in the middle of the stream, a forlorn-looking woman in a covered wagon, without a team. I called and asked if she wished to be taken to the shore. She answered: "The wagon is fast in the sand. My husband has gone to town for help to take it out, and I can't leave; for I have my dead baby here with me." It

was a sad sight, that mother, alone with her dead baby in the middle of the river! As soon as the citizens learned of her condition, they came and helped her out, and sent the family on their journey. I have often thought of that sorrowful scene, and wondered what became of those people, but never heard from them again. While they were traveling west, their child had died, and they were taking it to their journey's end to bury it.

During this Conference year I made an appointment on White Rock, in Kansas, and preached there a few times. One evening, on returning home from the appointment, night overtook me before I was half way across the dividing ridge between the streams, and I had to find my way in the dark. As there were no roads, I could only find my way by the stars and by following the ridges, which I knew pointed toward the river where I made my home. As I was moving through the night on this fifteen-mile trip home, I routed a number of buffaloes from their sleeping-places, and they leaped down the hills with a crash as they disappeared in the darkness.

Among other things to pester and annoy us in this new country, the Indians gave us no little trouble. Though they were not hostile, their continual begging tired the patience of the settlers. A number of Indian warriors came to Brother Penny's house in his absence, and demanded of Sister Penny something to eat, and if I had not been there, in all probability they would have compelled her to feed them. I am sick and tired of Indians and Indian stories, but am not altogether done with them yet.

Another year's work is completed, and I go to Conference to make my second year's report. But before leaving let me give my experience with a doctor and his wife. Ministers are often called to visit the sick and pray with the dying. Some time during my pastorate on this circuit one of our doctors was taken seriously ill, and thought he was going to die. As he was not a Christian, like many others at such a time he was very anxious that the preacher should come and pray for him, so I was called. Reaching his house quite late in the afternoon, conversation was continued until nearly dark, when it was suggested that we have prayers. He said he was

glad I had come, and wanted me to pray for him. As the wife was not expected to die just at this time, she wanted no praying in the house. Though she said nothing, I could see that she was not at all in a praying mood. Kneeling by the bedside of the sick man, however, I offered a hearty prayer in his behalf. While I was thus praying for the husband, the wife went about the house attending to her work, and making everything she came in contact with move with a bang. Paying no more attention to her than she did to me, the prayer was finished, and the doctor and I began talking of the salvation of his soul. He promised me and the Lord that, if he recovered, he would work for the glory of God the rest of his days. The prayers were answered, the man got well, but, like thousands of others, lied to the Lord, and went back to serving the devil.

In visiting the sick and making pastoral calls from house to house in a new country, a minister meets with heart-rending scenes as well as amusing incidents. In my pastoral calls, I have often visited families who were fearfully destitute of both food and clothing. One day, while about

to call for the first time on a family, not far from the house I noticed a woman near the roadside sitting in the grass. Driving on to the house, I was well received by the husband, but the wife was not present. My coming appeared to cause considerable confusion, and I saw one of the family slip out with an old dress. Soon after, the woman I had seen sitting in the grass came in, wearing the garment I had noticed. The poor woman was saving her only and well-worn dress to wear when some one should call; but this time she was caught away from the house without clothing enough to hide her nakedness. O, how my heart aches for such destitute people!

Before leaving this place entirely, let me call the reader's attention to a few places which I visited as a preacher outside of my regular work. In the summer of 1872 I went to the Little Blue River, and held meetings there. I remember preaching in a little schoolhouse a few miles west of where the little town of Oak now stands. I suppose it was the first sermon ever preached in that community. A minister was a novelty in that country.

During the same summer I preached in a

grove by the side of the wagon-road at what was then Oak Grove Ranch. The people seemed to be glad of the privilege of hearing the gospel, and really appreciated the services, though they were conducted out of doors. Here, along the Little Blue Valley, I preached in private houses, schoolhouses, and in the groves. I afterward traveled as pastor over that same ground for a number of years. Now, besides schoolhouses, they have churches and towns.

In the spring of 1873, leaving my charge, I made a trip to the Big Sandy Creek, in Clay County. While on that trip I held services in "Uncle John Graham's" house, which is somewhere near the town of Edgar. From that place I went over to a branch of the Big Sandy, in the Paschal, Thurber, and Stacy neighborhood. Here a local preacher, F. E. Penny, was engaged in a revival-meeting in a dug-out schoolhouse, which afterward gave way to a nice little frame schoolhouse, called "The Star Schoolhouse." In this dug-out, on the third day of November, 1872, F. E. Penny organized the first Methodist class in Clay County; and in this same dug-out I first met Miss Mary Stacy, who is now my

wife. Our life together thus far has been a constant pull, but we have pulled together; and now our journey is almost ended, and our life-work nearly done. This dug-out schoolhouse was located one mile south and about three-fourths of a mile west of the town of Ong, our present home and parish. Some of the charter members of that first class are now members in Ong. In fact, this class at Ong is the "Star" class, formerly mentioned, and hence the oldest Methodist class in Clay County. In that same dug-out schoolhouse Mrs. Wells (Stacy) taught the district school for three months. She reports having a good time, when there was neither rain nor snakes. In rainy weather the water leaked through the roof, and the earthen floor became so muddy that it was necessary to lay down boards in the house to keep the children out of the mud. One day the scholars saw a rain-cloud coming, and, thinking it might hail, they took the teacher's pony into the schoolhouse to shelter it from the hailstorm. The roof was neither rain-proof nor snake-proof. One day, while a class of little children were standing in a line reciting their lesson, a snake came down through the roof over

their heads, causing them to disband in double-quick time. After the class had scattered, the snake dropped down on the floor near where they had been standing. It had hardly reached the floor when about a half dozen boys went after it with missiles of death. With a broken back and a "bruised head," Mr. Snake was expelled from the school.

CHAPTER IX

OFF TO CONFERENCE AGAIN—THE GREAT APRIL SNOWSTORM—
APPOINTMENT TO THE LYONS CIRCUIT—MY TRIP TO THE
CHARGE—MY SECOND MARRIAGE—WORK ON THE CHARGE.

THE day I left home for the seat of Conference was warm, calm, and beautiful. The grass coated the prairie with summer's most lovely green, presenting a sight that was delightful to behold. The grain showed life, giving promise of an unusually early harvest. The gardens indicated early supplies to the toiler. All nature seemed to smile because of the absence of winter and the early appearance of summer. While nature thus gloried in its beauty and fragrance, the people supposed the snows of winter were gone, and that summer had come to stay. On the thirteenth of April, 1873, while I was on the road to Conference, the clouds gathered thick and fast, and it began to rain, and so continued until some time in the night, when snow approached from the northwest. In the morning of the fourteenth the snow came quite thickly

from that direction, and continued to come thicker and faster, until one of the most terrific snowstorms ever known in that part of the world swept down in wild fury. The wind blew at a fearful rate, the snow whirled and fled in every direction, and neither man nor beast could face it. Horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep by the hundreds perished in this dreadful storm. A man living near Red Cloud, while driving toward home, was overtaken by the storm, and though only three miles away, it was impossible to reach his destination through the blinding snow. On attempting to drive, facing the storm, he discovered that his horses were being smothered by the snow beating into and filling their nostrils, and every few rods he was forced to stop and relieve them. After a vigorous effort to reach his family, he gave it up, and stopped at a neighbor's house close by. The storm continued to rage so angrily that the wife became alarmed about her husband, thinking that he must be perishing in the dreadful tempest. In her excitement she wrapped her babe snugly and warmly in blankets, took it in her arms, and, as was supposed, went in search of her husband.

The husband, thinking all was well at home, remained with his neighbor until the following morning, and when the storm had somewhat abated, passed on his way home. Reaching there, he found his wife and child were gone, leaving no signs of their whereabouts. Believing they might have gone to a neighbor's, he went to several houses, but discovered no traces of them anywhere. The neighbors then turned out, and searched the snow-drifts, and finally found the wife not more than forty rods from her own dooryard, frozen to death, and her frozen babe snugly wrapped in its blankets and pressed to her bosom. While out in search of her husband in the fierce storm, the winds had doubtless blown her to the ground; she was unable to rise, and soon perished in the drifting snow.

The storm beat into the houses until, in many of them, the floors and beds were completely covered with snow, and in some places the inhabitants nearly perished in their beds. One man whom I knew in Clay County, had but lately built and moved into a new house while the roof was yet unfinished. The storm found him in

this condition, and blew the snow-drifts into his house and upon his beds so profusely that he and his family were chilled, and gave themselves up to die. When the storm had spent the greater part of its strength, with great difficulty a near neighbor succeeded in reaching them and saving their lives.

A Mr. D., who had recently come from the East and built a comfortable house for his family, had an amusing experience during that wonderful storm. His house was so far completed that it was habitable, but he had no shelter for his team of oxen. When the storm beat upon them, threatening them with death, he moved them to the south side of the house to protect them from the piercing winds from the north. Leaving them there a short time, he saw that they were likely to freeze to death before the next morning, if not sheltered in some better way; so he took them into his house, and kept them there until the next day, when the fury of the storm had passed.

Many people perished in the storm not far from their own houses. Others lost the way while attempting to go to the barn to feed their

stock. Some did not reach their barns for two days, and others only succeeded in finding them by tying one end of a rope to the house and the other end to the barn. By following the rope to and fro they were enabled to care for their stock without getting lost in the snow. Mr. David Thompson, one of Clay County's earliest settlers, was compelled to shelter cows, pig, dog, and chickens in the house with his family, to keep them from perishing. Four head of cattle, one hog, one dog, all his chickens, and eight persons occupied the same room. Notwithstanding this storm occurred on Easter Sunday, the thirteenth of April, it was the most severe and destructive that the oldest settlers of this country had ever known.

Many of the people lived in dug-outs that were completely covered with snow, and the residents were compelled to dig their way out to keep from suffocating. On the evening of the third day the storm-cloud broke, and the sun appeared in the sky. In a few days the snow had disappeared, and nature put on its most beautiful robe and smiled as before. How welcome the bright sunshine after a long and severe storm!

So delightfully beautiful will be the home of the soul after the storm of life is over, and we rest in the quiet sunshine of God's love!

When the storm had passed away, I resumed my journey to the seat of Conference. Driving as far as Beatrice, more than half the distance, I there borrowed money of my mother to take me the rest of the way on the cars. This year I reported \$132 on salary and a goodly increase of membership on the charge. The brethren requested the presiding elder to return me to the Red Cloud Circuit; but he told them that I had seen enough hardship, and he should remove me, and let some one else try that new field awhile. At this Conference, held at Platts-mouth, in the spring of 1873, I was admitted into full connection, and on the 20th day of April, was ordained deacon by Bishop E. G. Andrews. When the appointments were announced, I was assigned to Lyons Circuit, in Burt County, near the Missouri River. A long journey was now before me. I must first return to Red Cloud, my old field of labor, and go from thence to my newly-appointed field, more than a

hundred and fifty miles distant, making in all more than four hundred and fifty miles' travel from the time of starting to Conference until reaching my new charge, and most of this distance with my ponies. Returning to Red Cloud, my few effects were loaded in my light buggy, and I again took the road, plodding through the mud and rain toward my new home. At this time the Republican River was high and running rapidly, yet I must cross; so in I went, the ponies almost swimming. The water was so deep that it came up into the buggy, and wet some of my books. I afterward learned that one of the brethren said, "No difference how high the river is, Brother Wells will cross if he has to take a pony under each arm and swim over." I crossed, however, without attempting the feat. This journey of more than one hundred and fifty miles was to me a long and difficult one. A cold, drizzling rain fell from the north, keeping me wet much of the time; the roads were rough and muddy all the way, and the trip was altogether a very unpleasant one. After a few days of such wading through the mud and traveling in the

rain, I reached my charge, and found a boarding-place with a Brother Randall, near the parsonage.

Lyons was a large country circuit, with four appointments and room for as many more. The parsonage was some ten miles from any town, and there was no Methodist Episcopal church building on the entire charge. But there were frame schoolhouses that admitted preaching, which was quite a treat to me, and at one point we occupied the Presbyterian church part of the time. It was the first church building of any kind in which I held divine service since entering the regular ministry.

Though this was a large and unwieldy circuit, it was far better than working in the extreme frontier settlements. The country had been settled for several years, and there was considerable wealth among the farmers, which enabled them to give a minister a good support. The circuit had been organized some four or five years, and was quite prosperous. I now felt my weakness more forcibly than at any time since entering the ministry. Here I was required to preach to lawyers, doctors, school-teachers, and

preachers, all of whom had better early advantages in the line of education than myself. This had a tendency to provoke me to a more diligent study of the common English branches, while at the same time pursuing my Conference course. But few can realize the amount of work I had to do on so large a circuit, probably more than any other young man in the Conference. Besides my Conference studies, which I felt must be kept up, I was still pursuing some of the common branches of learning, making double work in the line of study. On the Lyons Circuit I had what I then thought to be a good and easy time, though there was a great deal of frontier work to be done on the charge. Some days I traveled forty miles, and preached three times during the day, eating nothing from early morning until ten o'clock at night. Only a person with an iron constitution can endure such wear and tear as this and last long.

During one of my rounds on this charge I preached at an evening appointment in the dark. Our meetings at this point were held in a country schoolhouse, where the brethren depended on carrying lamps from home to light the house.

What is everybody's business is nobody's business; consequently each came to the meeting depending on the others to provide the necessary light, and darkness was the result. Having congregated for services, I determined not to disappoint the people—for I had driven some fifteen miles to preach to them, and would not be at the place again for two weeks—so I preached without seeing my audience. Perhaps I would make a better impression on the minds of my hearers if I should always preach to them in the dark, especially when my coat is as seedy as sometimes happened.

On the charge I found Methodist people of considerable means and influence, which was a great help to me in my work. Among these was Uncle David Clark, a wealthy farmer, a lover of Methodism, and a warm friend of the preacher, in whose house the itinerant always found a welcome. Brother Yeaton was a well-to-do farmer, not far from the little town of Lyons, from which the circuit took its name. He, too, was a stanch Methodist, and always had a home for the preacher. At Brother Yeaton's house I had an unpleasant experience

with an Indian, who called for dinner for himself and squaw, promising fifty cents for the two. Brother Yeaton was not at home, and the Indian seemed to think he could do as he pleased with Sister Yeaton in regard to the dinner. After the two had eaten their fill, they began to gather up the food that remained, and to put it in their blankets to carry away to their camp. As Sister Yeaton was somewhat frightened, and knew not what to do, I stopped them from taking the food, and told them they should pay her for what they had put in their blankets. This they at first refused to do, saying that their papooses at the camp were hungry, and must have something to eat. Seeing they were determined not to pay her at all, I snatched a tomahawk lying beside the plate of the buck Indian, and said to him, "I shall keep this until you pay the woman for what you have eaten and taken from the table;" for they had put more in their blankets than they had eaten. Having no desire to part with his highly-prized tomahawk, he reluctantly paid all I asked, and departed. There is little or no use trying to reason with Indians of this kind; they will only do that which

is right when compelled. If this Indian had not been interfered with, he would have taken all the food from the table, and left without paying the woman a cent.

It would be unjust to pass by without mentioning Brother and Sister Shaw, who lived near Lyons on this charge. No one took more pains to make the preacher and his family feel at home than they. Their home was a resting-place for ministers of all denominations who might chance to call for a night's lodging. To me it was a pleasant place. In my lonely hours I often resorted to this home, and found relief from loneliness and sorrow.

On leaving, I thought I should never find any people who would take as much interest in a preacher's welfare as some of the brethren on this charge. But wherever I went, I found others just as good and as thoughtful of the minister. Brother and Sister Randall, with whom I boarded during the first few months on this charge, were kind, genial, accommodating, and made a pleasant home for me while with them. Should their eyes chance to fall upon these lines, they may know that their kindness

has never been forgotten. The Lord bless those who have been kind to the itinerant and his family!

When I came to this charge, I was still a widower, far away from all my folks, and even deprived of the much-desired companionship of my little child, which was still with her grandmother, near Beatrice. About three months after first reaching this charge I returned to Fairbury, Jefferson County, and, according to previous arrangement, married Miss Mary Stacy, who was born in Ashtabula County, Ohio, and was raised in Ashtabula and Lake Counties. You may remember I first met her in a dug-out schoolhouse, in which I preached while helping a local minister in a series of meetings, and where she afterward taught school. After our marriage, we took our little daughter home to live with us. Up to this writing, we have lived together, and thus far our union has been a happy one. Mrs. Wells has proved worthy of the respect of the Church, which she has faithfully served, and has been a great help to me in my work. She has borne to me four children, and has been a good mother as well as a faithful

wife. Uncomplainingly she has accepted the hardships and burdens of an itinerant's life. Though pressed with want in food and clothing, and pinched with cold because of poor houses and lack of fuel, she has been the last to complain of her hard lot. There are but few who realize the trials of the itinerant's wife, especially of those on new and large fields when the supply is scarcely enough to keep the family from want. Besides all this, she, like the minister, is unmercifully criticised and expected to be perfect in looks and manners. The year we were sent to the Lyons Charge, the Conference time of meeting was changed from spring to fall, making the Conference year eighteen months. During those eighteen months we had seasons of rejoicing, interspersed with seasons of sorrow and disappointment. The long Conference year gave me more time to prepare for examination in the Conference Course of Study, and went far toward helping me through. We lived at the time in an unfinished parsonage, a small house in the country, and here the Lord blessed our home with a little boy, which increased our cares as well as our joys.

Before we came to this charge the Seventh-day Adventists had been here and led away some of our members, injuring the religious element in the community, as they always do where they get foothold enough to induce people to follow them. Our members who were led away by their influence, finally fell into sinful ways, observing neither Saturday nor Sunday; for the natural tendency of such teaching is to cause people to violate the laws of God and the country at the same time. When the laws of a country which do not conflict with the laws of God are openly violated, the laws of God are also violated; for the laws of God would have us obey the laws of our country.

Conference is again at hand, and we go to Omaha to report our charge. It is now the fall of 1874, the long Conference year is ended, and, with others, I go to the sitting to attend to pressing duties there. This year my report shows eighty members in full connection and \$400 on salary, making about \$266 per calendar year for the support of my family. But being used to this, I was not at all frightened. For three reasons I expected to return to Lyons Charge an-

other year. First, because the leading members asked for my return; second, because the presiding elder told them I should be returned; and, thirdly, because neither Mrs. Wells nor the babe was well enough to be removed. Thus we fully expected to spend another year here; but when the appointments were announced, I was assigned to Norfolk, Madison County, nearly a hundred miles west. Though I had given myself wholly into the hands of the appointing powers of the Conference, to do with me as they thought best, yet I was grieved; for I felt sure that if the bishop knew of my circumstances he would not remove me. This is the only time in all my ministry, thus far, that I felt aggrieved on being removed to a new charge; but perhaps it was the best for us, after all. Knowing that we were removed to make room for a preacher who did not wish to go farther west, or, in other words, who would not go to the circuit to which I was assigned, I had reason to be grieved, I think. This man, however, was not a member of our Conference, but was on trial in some other Conference, and came here to find a soft job. Fail-

ing to find it, in a short time he left his work and went home.

Before leaving, I must notice some things of interest to me, if not to the reader. While here I married my first couple. We were pretty closely run for money at times, and our wardrobes would become quite worn before we could replenish them. At one time our little girl was needing a new pair of shoes, and we had not the means to purchase them. On Sunday, just at this crisis, as I was going to my appointment, a gentleman met me on the way, and requested me to marry a couple in the country not far from the place of my appointment. The invitation was gladly accepted, and I was soon at the house where the wedding was to occur. But what could I do? I neither knew a ceremony nor had a Discipline with me. However, the difficulty was fortunately overcome. I found a copy of the Statutes of Nebraska containing a form which I appropriated, and the wedding passed off all right. It was a lucky discovery for me; for the bridegroom gave me ten dollars for my services.

Some of the weddings on this charge failed to be so profitable. A very richly-dressed young man and woman came to the parsonage to be married. From their appearance, I thought I would be rewarded with a liberal fee, which I promised Mrs. Wells for her own spending money. After the ceremony, the bridegroom called me into the kitchen, and informed me that he was hard run for money, and I would have to wait on him a few days, to which I replied, "All right." I do n't know just how many days he calls a "few," though it must be what we call many, for I have seen nothing of the wedding fee yet.

I not only had much amusement in regard to marriage fees while on this charge, but some really laughable things in regard to my salary. One of the stewards came to me one day and said, "If you will show me the way around the charge, and introduce me to our Church people, I will spend a whole day in trying to collect your salary." Early in the morning we started on a collecting tour. The first house at which we called was that of a poor widow, who gave the steward three dollars, which, no doubt, was a

great sacrifice. The next call was on a brother who was pretty well-to-do, and he gave something, but I have forgotten how much. The next call was at the house of a wealthy farmer, where we put up for dinner. Here the steward thought he would get a good sum, as the man seemed very religious and willing to do something to help the Church. After dinner, and enjoying a social chat, the steward told the good brother his mission, to which he replied, "Yes, we must do something for Brother Wells," at the same time feeling in his pocket for the necessary means. Finding nothing suitable, he said to his wife, "Look in my pants pocket hanging up there." After carefully searching his pockets, she said, "There's nothing less than a twenty-dollar bill here." He then told her to look in the boy's pockets. She had been gone but a short time when she called out, "Here is ten cents." He replied, "Well, bring that along; it's better than nothing, and we will try and do something more for Brother Wells another time." You may be sure we got more fun out of the ten cents than a sportsman can get out of a hundred dollars. To the reader this story

may seem almost incredible; but it is a positive fact, and the steward would swear to it if called upon to do so. Though this man was well-to-do in this world's goods, he could hardly read and write his own name, which partially accounts, no doubt, for the ten cents he gave toward his preacher's salary. What poor, ignorant mortals there are, even in our own enlightened land!

On this charge it was difficult to get fuel to keep ourselves warm in cold weather. Without the means to buy coal, we burned wood, which I drew from the Missouri River, about thirteen miles away. Having no team heavy enough to draw wood so far, I borrowed one of a brother, and drew wood on shares, giving him half for the use of his team. The fuel thus obtained was driftwood, found along the banks of the river and on sand-bars. Some of it was dry and good for fuel, but much of it was wet, soggy stuff, that would hardly burn at all. Perhaps if I had not been so independent and had been less modest in asking the brethren to help me, I might have avoided the extra work in drawing wood so far; but it has always been my disposition to help myself rather than call upon others; and, as the

brethren complained of hard times, I did what I could in such manual labor, and still carried on the circuit and my studies. I have always been timid about demanding my salary; and, if I could, would far rather earn my living with my hands than ask the brethren for a dollar. It is always embarrassing to me to know that the stewards are going from place to place, soliciting funds for my support. But this can not be avoided, and therefore must be borne. It seems to be the only way a minister's salary can be raised on a new field.

CHAPTER X

**MOVING TO NORFOLK—TURNED OUT OF DOORS BY A BROTHER
IN THE CHURCH—THE DEATH OF OUR BABE—LIVING IN
THE HOUSE WITH A BAD FAMILY—THE GRASSHOPPERS
AGAIN—THE FUEL WE BURNED—DRAWING WOOD BY
HAND—OUR PRESIDING ELDER GOES EAST AND SOLICITS
AID FOR THE PEOPLE—OUR WORK IN THE HARVEST-
FIELD—I GO TO CONFERENCE—ORDAINED ELDER—RE-
TURN TO NORFOLK—OUR EXPERIENCE ON THE CHARGE
THE SECOND YEAR.**

AS THERE were no railroads running through this country to Norfolk, our new field of labor, we hired a brother to take our goods through with a team, and I took my wife and children in the buggy. Before starting to our new field, our presiding elder instructed us to go to a Brother G., about two miles from the town where we were to make our home. Here, he said, we would find a Methodist home, where we could stay until ready to go to keeping house. With Mrs. Wells in poor health and a sick babe, we traveled three days through the mud and cold, hoping to find a welcome when at our journey's end. On reaching Norfolk late in the

afternoon, we met a local preacher, who kindly directed us to Brother G.'s house, which the presiding elder had recommended to us as a home until our goods should arrive. Late in the evening, cold and hungry and with a sick child, we called at Brother G.'s, made ourselves known, and were very coolly invited into the house. On first arriving, we found that Brother G. was not at home, and thought, perhaps, when he arrived, our reception would be different. He soon came home from his work, but, instead of bringing sunshine with him, the clouds were thicker and blacker than ever. He gave us no encouragement whatever, but by his actions made us understand that we were not welcome, even to the circuit, much less to his home. The meal being ready, we were invited to the dining-room, where we ate our supper alone. After we were done, and had left the room, the family sat down and ate. We consoled ourselves somewhat by the thought that, in the morning, it would be different; but in the morning we sat down to breakfast alone, and the family ate theirs, as before. This was not done because of the want of room or the need of dishes, for

they had an abundance of both; but it was done to make it appear that we were a great burden on their hands. The lady of the house claimed to be unwell, and not able to do the work. Mrs. Wells offered to help about the housework; but the good sister, by her actions, gave her to understand that she did n't want any of her help. Though Brother G. was looked upon as one of the leading Methodists of that country, he gave no word of encouragement regarding the work, and said, "There is no house where you can live; neither is there any chance for a support on the charge." Though young in the ministry, I had gone through too many rough places to be backed down in this way. But for my wife and children, I should have gone to a barn or haystack and slept, rather than staid over night where I was not welcome. I did just such a thing as that when a boy. One time father was holding a series of meetings in a little town about twelve miles from home, which my brothers and I were allowed to attend. On going home with a family to spend the night, I felt that we were not welcome, and determined not to stay. So I took my hat, and went to the

barn, climbed on top of a hay-shed in the open air, and rested there until morning. I would rather do the same now than stay where I am not wanted. We had passed through too many hardships to feel we could not live where others were doing well. If we could do no better, we could make our home in a tent. But I believed there would be a way provided.

Soon after breakfast we drove to town to search for a house to live in, and to look after our goods, which we expected that day. Hearing of a young lawyer by the name of Robertson, who was a Methodist, we hunted him up, introduced ourselves, and told him what we wanted. He seemed to be very glad to see us, gave us a very warm reception, and said, "Yes, we will find you a house." In less than half an hour he came to us with the information that he had found a house into which we could move at any time. Not knowing how coolly we were treated at G.'s, he advised us to go back there and stay until our goods should arrive. As apparently we were not wanted, to return and stay another night was a hard pill to take; but as we had no money to spend at the hotel, and

our babe was sick, we felt it was the only thing to be done at the time. Besides, we had left some of our things at Brother G.'s, which required us to go there anyhow. On our way back, we met Mrs. G., wading through the mud toward a neighbor's, and she informed us that we would find our things on the porch. On telling her that our goods had not come, and we did not know where to go, she said, "I am not able to wait on you any longer." She was footing it away from home to get rid of us, working much harder than she need have done for us at home. Going to the house, we found our goods on the porch, and the doors locked as against a thief. Previous to this we had thought it possible that this unkindness was only imaginary on our part, but now there was no mistake. They did n't want us, and had turned us out of doors.

The reader may know something of our feelings when he reflects that we were among strangers, with but little money, a very sick child, and no shelter from the night air. Surely this was one of the greatest trials of my life. If an enemy had thus turned us from his house,

we could have endured it much better; but it was one who should have been our best friend. If I mistake not, this brother was a steward in the Methodist Church at the time.

Notwithstanding the great annoyance, we laughed over our predicament, and returned to the town, where we met a good local brother, who lived five or six miles in the country. After telling him how the presiding elder had directed us to Brother G.'s, and how we had been treated by Brother G., he sent us to his home, and there we were received right royally. This brother's name is John Allberry, a local preacher, whom we shall ever hold in grateful remembrance for his kindness. Brother Allberry was a poor man, but had a large heart. Though he lived in a small house, he made us feel at home and far more comfortable than if he had possessed all the needed room and conveniences, without a good, warm welcome. After getting my family under shelter, appointments were made for Sunday preaching. The morning appointment was at the Cunningham Schoolhouse, where I found friends by the score. Brother Cunningham was a well-to-do

farmer, though not a Church member at the time. He took great interest in our welfare, perhaps for the sake of his wife, who was one of the leading Methodists of that community, and who always delighted to make the preacher and his family feel at home in her house.

Before our first Sunday on the charge the news of Brother G.'s reception of the pastor and his family had spread throughout the country, and every Methodist home was consequently now thrown open to us. The people, Church members and all, were so indignant that they made Brother G. wish he was somewhere else. The poor fellow lost friends on all sides, withdrew from the Church, and soon after died. We shall leave him in the hands of a just God, hoping that he repented of his stinginess, and is in heaven. Although we had such a cool reception at first, we never anywhere have met with warmer friends than on that circuit.

After a few days' waiting, our goods came, and we were keeping house on our new field of labor. Our ill-treatment made for us many friends, and perhaps gave us access to the hearts of the people as nothing else could have done.

We moved into the rooms of an old hotel building, which was rusty, dirty, and cold. We could endure this, when supplied with fuel for the fire and something to eat. In knocking around from place to place in the cold, damp weather, our sick babe continued to grow worse, and in one short week after settling in Norfolk he died. Again we were smitten with sorrow. Here we were, far from home, among entire strangers, and our little child torn from our bosoms. But this new and deep affliction called around us many friends, who ministered to us in our sorrow, and buried our little one on the hillside in the Norfolk Cemetery, where its little form still lies, and where our parental hearts often go to weep. After making the acquaintance of the people on the entire charge, we were well pleased with our circuit. I was the first traveling preacher sent to that charge by the Conference, though Brother Beels, a local preacher, had served it the previous year. So, you see, we were still paving the way for some one else. This year, for several reasons, Mrs. Wells usually accompanied me to my appointments. She was among

strangers, and would be lonesome if left at home. Then, the house was very cold, with unpleasant surroundings, especially on Sundays, when she would have only the company of our little daughter. A German family lived in one room of the house we occupied, and on Sundays the Germans would gather there for a good time. Sometimes they would spend much of the day in quarreling and fussing with each other; at other times they would have a general jollification all day long. Not unfrequently, when we were from home, the woman in the neighboring room would ransack our premises from top to bottom, and take what she dared, and conceal it. This we knew to be true; for we found missing things in her possession, which she could not deny having taken. And the man who lived in the house, our neighbor, was accommodating enough to help use both our wood and hay.

These little incidents are mentioned that the reader may better understand the trials experienced by an itinerant and his wife. There are people who say, "What a fine time preachers have in this world!" I hope the people who

say this may be so fortunate as to read the contents of this little book; not because it is a wonderful production, but because of the plain, simple facts it gives in regard to the frontier work of the ministry. True, there are many blessed things in connection with the work of the ministry. If there were no sunshine, no pastor would be able to endure the burdens imposed upon him.

When we were taking leave of the people at Red Cloud, a Baptist lady said to me: "I envy you Methodist preachers in one thing: you go to so many places, and make so many friends;" to which I replied, "Yes, and so many enemies, too." Preachers get the bitter with the sweet. Of course, my experience is not the experience of all preachers. As with other occupations, some have smooth sailing, and others have a rough time all the way through. Besides, I am not giving the bright side, but attempting to picture the dark side, of a minister's life on the frontier.

This year we had another very dry season, resulting in light crops, on which the grasshoppers came down by multiplied millions.

Great destitution and suffering followed, and it was hard for the preacher to obtain support. The grasshoppers came in such swarms that they looked in the distance like fast-gathering rainclouds flying through the air. In some places on the fields of grain they were so numerous that the grain was completely hid from sight. If they had kept still, a man with a scoop-shovel could have filled a common wagon-bed with them in a few minutes. For a number of years it seemed to be our lot to meet with the grasshoppers, which would take meat, bread, and other things from our table.

The fall season passed off pleasantly and quietly, and we enjoyed our work. The trials we passed through at the outset better prepared us for others that might follow. We had four regular appointments, with preaching at each every two weeks. Winter set in early, and was long and severe, which caused us considerable suffering. I say suffering; for we did suffer from the cold. We did a great deal of traveling in the bitter weather; but this we did n't mind so much as having to suffer from the cold

when at home. Our house was an unfinished frame building, and exceedingly airy. Besides a house exposed to the winds, we had the poorest of fuel. There being no coal in the country, we burned such wood as the brethren could bring to us, principally green cottonwood. Whoever has tried burning green cottonwood for winter fuel will know how we fared during the severe weather. The only way we could keep fire at all in the coldest weather was by having a good supply in the house, and, while a part was burning, the rest would be thawing and drying. In this way, by continually crowding the stove with wood, we managed to avoid freezing. Sometimes during the severest weather our woodpile gave out, and I would have to replenish it with my own hands. About a half mile up the river there was a large plum-thicket, with many dead bushes. When we were out of wood, I took a long rope and my ax, went to this place, cut down dead plum-bushes, piled them on the ice in the river, tied the rope about them, and dragged them on the ice to the house, which was only a few rods from the

river. In this way I could draw an immense pile of brush, especially when the ice was smooth.

Here let me say to the reader that, during all this time, we had a home to which we could have gone and made a comfortable living. But we thought that duty called us from home and friends, and so we went. I have been wonderfully astonished at seemingly intelligent people's questions in regard to our living and making money; such as the following: "Can't you make a better living on your farm than you can by preaching?" As a matter of course we could, if a living was the only consideration. How little many Christian people realize what a call to the ministry means! I certainly would never have preached if I had not felt, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

The crops having been destroyed by drouth and grasshoppers during the summer, it seemed almost impossible that many of the people could get through the winter. Taking into consideration the condition of the preachers and Church on the frontier work, our presiding elder went East, and solicited money, goods, and provisions

for the people, and especially for the preachers' families. Had he not done so, we should have seen much harder times, or been compelled to abandon our work. Goods were shipped to me, to use whatever was needed for my family, and the rest was to be given to the most needy around us. In this way many were helped through the winter. The preachers throughout our Western country were helped in this way, and it was made possible for them to remain on their work.

After passing through all this, and seeing how wonderfully the Lord had sustained us, we can realize the force and truthfulness of the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." I feel sure that when a minister goes to his work and does his duty, the Lord will provide for his needs, though he may have a very difficult charge. If the Lord has not promised the minister much of this world, he sometimes gives it to him. As he has not promised ease in Zion, let us not be discouraged if we do not find it.

We received financial aid in another way while on this charge. I drove a four-horse team

nearly through one harvesting of small grain. The Lord, in thus giving me something to do at which I could earn a few dollars, helped me to provide for my family. Some may think it disgraceful for a minister to work in the harvest-field, but I enjoyed it, and felt it quite an honor to be able to do so much for myself. Want did not compel me to go to work in the harvest-field, but we had a scanty supply, and I thought this would help fill our larder and do no harm further than taking me from my studies. I have always told the brethren that I had good, strong, and willing hands, and, if need be, could make my living by manual labor. The good Lord, however, has always provided a way, and I have never been compelled to leave the ministry in order to make a living, though, at times my family has had scanty rations and but little of the luxuries of life. Many times, during this Conference year, we have sat down to the table with only bread and coffee for breakfast; at other times our meal consisted of bread and butter alone, without tea, coffee, or sugar. At the beginning of my ministry I adopted the rule of not going in debt for any-

thing when it could be avoided. Because of this rule, we were sometimes for weeks without sugar in the house, excepting a little Mrs. Wells laid by in case of sickness or other emergencies.

During the winter of this Conference year we had some good revival-meetings, and many were taken into the Church. The Lord blessed the entire charge, and gave us many souls for our hire. Blessed be the name of the Lord! In all my ministerial work, to this time, I had not preached in a Methodist church since joining the Conference, and had been inside of none excepting at Conference. My work had been in private dwellings and schoolhouses, or in borrowed churches. At Lyons we occupied the Presbyterian church, and at Norfolk the Congregational church. These things are not told complainingly, but only to show the real work of my life. I suppose I am best adapted to border work, and, if so, there is where I ought to be.

Some time during the year another appointment was made at a little town called Pierce, in Pierce County. Mine was the first Method-

ist preaching, and probably the first preaching of any kind, in this little town.

At the opening of spring we moved into a house on a farm, a short distance from town, where we had much better accommodation than in the old tenement-house.

Conference is at hand, and I am to preach my last sermon, and go.

At my last meeting in Norfolk before Conference, many of the citizens turned out to hear me, as we all thought, possibly for the last time. At the appointed time I announced this text, from which I tried to preach, "The Lord is a Spirit." After hammering at and wrestling with it for about thirty minutes, I sat down completely chagrined and wonderfully mortified. I felt really ashamed of having so bored the people. The next day a steward went about the town, trying to make up my salary, and called on one of the merchants for this purpose. The merchant asked how much he wanted. The steward answered, "As much as I can get." The merchant said, "Well, I'll give you five dollars; for the last sermon Mr. Wells preached is worth that much to me." Had there been

any chance for thinking so, I would have thought he was making light of my sermon; but I could not doubt his sincerity. After this I concluded that, though I did not please myself in trying to preach, still the people might be pleased; also, that I could not always tell when I was interesting the congregation. Perhaps the merchant was the only one interested or benefited at all by my discourse; but if it did good even to one, it was a success. I find that almost any kind of a sermon will interest some one in a congregation. After years of experience in addressing audiences, one can usually tell whether he is interesting a congregation or not. When a speaker sees that his hearers are interested, it is an inspiration to him, and it is much easier to speak to them than to a heedless audience.

Off again to Conference, which meets this year at Lincoln. There being no railroad from here to Lincoln, we must drive through with our ponies. In company with other ministers, we journeyed toward the seat of Conference. After traveling until nearly sundown, we began to inquire for a lodging-place for the night. The

first man whom we addressed said he could not keep us, but his neighbor, a little farther on, could. Going to that neighbor, he said he could not keep us, but his next neighbor, a little farther on, could. Calling at the next house, we were told the same thing. By this time night was upon us, and we were traveling in the dark. Coming to another house, we drove up to the yard, and asked the man if he could keep us over night. He said, "Well, no; I can't keep you to-night." Notwithstanding we were preachers, we by this time had become quite mischievous over our many failures; for the thing indeed was laughable as well as ridiculous. One of the brethren who was a good-natured fellow, and full of fun, said to this man, "We have been looking for a place to stay over night for several miles back, and every one has turned us off, and now, if somebody do n't look out, he is going to get a licking." Going a short distance farther, we called at a widow's house, where we found a home for the night.

The next day we drove until long after night, that we might be at the opening of Conference, and answer to roll-call. Here I reported

thirty-three members in full connection and two hundred dollars on salary. I presume that fifty dollars would cover what I received in cash this year, as I took nearly all my salary in trade of some kind. I remember one man's giving me potatoes. He said: "Come down, and get some potatoes. You might just as well have them as not; for if you do n't get them, I shall feed them to the hogs." Those potatoes came handy to us; but if he could have sold them for the money or used them himself, we would have got none of them. Just so with even certain Church members: that which they can neither use themselves nor sell, and which they do n't care to feed to the hogs, they give to the Lord, if his poor servants will come and gather it. But such contributions are often welcome to the frontier preacher; he is glad to get them. Some of our people are like the Dutchman who, when asked how he managed to make money so fast, replied: "We work hard and raise all we can; and what we can, we sell; and what we can't sell, we feed to the hogs; and what the hogs won't eat, we eat ourselves." Some Church members sell what they can, and what they

can't sell they eat, and what they can't eat they give to the preacher. I am glad to say that we have few such men in our Church; for our people are a sacrificing class of Christians, many of them doing even more than the Lord requires.

This year we had a long siege at Conference. One of the brethren was accused of certain irregularities, and arraigned for trial, and I was appointed on the committee to try the case. The case was brought before the committee at the beginning of the Conference, and continued several days and nights. At the close of the trial we sat all night long. A little after sun-up the case was turned over into our hands, and we closed for breakfast. O how sad to have a brother minister accused of crime and arraigned before the Conference! I wish there might be some way to bring the accuser to justice when the accused is found innocent!

At Lincoln, on the nineteenth day of September, 1875, I was ordained elder by Bishop Gilbert Haven, who has long since quit the field and gone home to rest from his labors. Now I am a full-fledged Methodist preacher. When

the appointments were announced, I was returned to Norfolk to serve another year.

This year was not so full of trials and afflictions as the previous one, though we had rough times and plenty of hard work. Having to move into another house, we rented one still farther in the country, and our home now was a country home. Here we spent the winter in a little house not more than twelve by fourteen feet in size, and one story high. Though the house was small, we were quite comfortable, and enjoyed ourselves very well. The circuit had grown more in size than in numbers, making an unwieldy work on our hands. An additional burden was imposed upon us by the removal of a local preacher who had supplied an adjoining circuit, and my being put in charge of his work. I had now the oversight of two large circuits, which I could manage only by employing the local preachers to help me out. In this way we gave each point preaching every two weeks, though there were nine appointments on the two circuits.

After the presiding elder had removed the

brother from the Madison Charge, and placed it in my care, we removed to Madison, because there was a parsonage at that place, which, though small, was better than living in a rented house. This was our fourth move in less than two years. In moving into all kinds of houses we find all kinds of insects that prey upon human blood. One house we found as nearly alive with bugs as a house could be, and not walk off. Soon after going to bed the first night, the bugs sallied out upon us by the hundreds, as if we were sent there on purpose to feed them. Wife and I heroically defended ourselves and child from the invaders by killing them as fast as they charged upon us, not allowing too many to get hold of us at once; for they acted as if they intended to carry us to their hiding-place for future use. After killing the first squad that came out of ambush, we began to count as fast as we destroyed them, and by actual count we killed more than two hundred, besides the many we had deprived of life before beginning to count. Some people have a great dread of certain kinds of bugs, especially such as creep into houses and get into bed with them; but if they were as

well acquainted with these innocent little creatures as are the frontier preachers of the Western country, they would know that their bite is not always fatal, though sometimes they do cause considerable suffering.

While Mrs. Wells, our little daughter, and I were crossing the State of Nebraska on our way to our circuit in the northern part of the State, we called at a sod farmhouse to stay overnight. Being made welcome, we went in and found everything as neat and clean as could be in any house of the kind. That evening the lady had just finished house-cleaning, and everything seemed to be in order. Wife and I were given a clean bed; so we took our little girl, and retired. The weather was exceedingly warm, and soon after going to bed the child began to fret, and said, "Mamma, the mosquitos bite me so." Within a few minutes we felt them lighting on our faces, but not with the smell of a mosquito. They continued to come faster and faster, until we were rolling, scratching, and pounding in self-defense. We spent a night of wakefulness and continual warfare, but came off victorious, though not without great loss of blood. Look-

ing over the battle-ground the next morning, we found it stained with the blood of many slain. Our hostess was a nice and tidy house-keeper; but, as her house-roof was made of poles, hay, sorghum-stalks, and dirt, it was a splendid rendezvous for bugs. There they could live in safety during the day, and at night sally forth on a foraging expedition, drop from the roof into the face of the unsuspecting victim, fill themselves, and return to their quarters in the roof. The only possible way to drive them from their barracks in such a place is to burn roof and all. Now, do n't think that Nebraska preachers have seen no bugs! The frontier preachers of Nebraska are used to Indians, buffaloes, elk, deer, antelopes, turkeys, prairie-dogs, grasshoppers, bedbugs, fleas, and sod-houses.

This year we made a trip to Fairbury, to visit our folks, driving all the way there and back with our ponies. While returning to our charge, it rained most of the time. One day we traveled all day long through the rain in an open buggy. The reader may ask, "Why travel all day in the rain?" Because the frontier preachers have no money to pay hotel bills, or to spend anywhere

in lying over for the rain to cease. There is no class of professional men that is not better paid for their work than the average preacher. True, some ministers have large salaries, and live on the best of the land; but they are the exception.

This year we went through the regular routine of work on the charge, having a very good year, but no great revival demonstration. The people in Madison made it quite pleasant for us while among them. Though we are not writing of the bright side of our life, yet, with much pleasure, I remember one incident of our happy experience while serving the Madison and Norfolk Circuits, which I must relate. One beautiful day in the summer season, about thirty of the citizens procured a large tent, and went on an excursion to the "Yellow Banks," on the Elkhorn River, about fifteen miles away. Here we pleasantly spent two days and nights in a general picnic, with fishing. We sang, delivered speeches, and made the woods ring with our laughter. In the afternoon of the second day we returned home, every one refreshed and feeling better for having laid aside home cares for even so short a time.

This Conference year passed off very pleasantly, and with but little worth mentioning in this sketch.

Conference-time is again at hand, and we must be off to Falls City. On our way to the seat of Conference we went by the way of Blue Springs. In this little town, fourteen years ago, I preached my first sermon in Nebraska, and the second one of my life, and here I was licensed as a local preacher. The town was changed, and many of the old settlers had gone; but there were a few faces that I yet recognized. During the night I was taken quite unwell, and remained so all the next day. Riding all day in the hot sun made me still worse. At night I called at the home of the Rev. I. M. Adair, then pastor at Table Rock, whose good wife took my case in hand, brought me through, and I felt quite well the next morning. After breakfast, Brother Adair and I drove to the seat of the Conference, and answered to roll-call. This year I reported one hundred and three members for the Norfolk and Madison Circuits, and received one hundred and thirty dollars on salary. The grasshoppers had taken a greater portion of my salary claim

and eaten it up, so we had to be satisfied with what they left. Spiritually and socially this had been a very pleasant year, but, financially, among the hardest in all my ministry; for now I had a family to support, and needed more than when alone.

When the appointments were announced, my name was called for Oakdale, which is upon the Elkhorn Valley, in Antelope County, still farther west than my previous appointment. Returning home, trusty persons were hired to remove our goods, and, with our ponies, we rode away in quest of our new field of labor.

One bright, beautiful spring morning my presiding elder, J. B. Maxfield, and I went to look after Methodist families, thinking to establish a new preaching-point. Knowing of a county superintendent who was a Methodist and living in the community, we directed our course to his house, expecting to take dinner with him. Reaching the place, we drove into the yard, and then entered the house, and introduced ourselves to the superintendent's wife, who received us kindly, but with great embarrassment. The house we had entered was partly dug in the

ground and partly built of sod, with a dirt roof and floor, the wife wearing hardly enough clothing to hide her shame, and her children running about the room, some of them almost stark naked. Dinner was begun, and some of the children hurried off to the neighbors to borrow dishes; for, from appearances, there was not an earthen plate or teacup in the house. Going out to the haystack, we lay there until called for dinner. If I ever pitied a woman, I did this one; for she was a handsome, intelligent, and noble Christian lady, but was completely crushed with poverty and neglect. How inhuman some men are, who claim to be husbands and Christians!

CHAPTER XI

SETTLING AT OAKDALE—ROUTED FROM BED AT A BROTHER'S HOUSE—PREACHED AT O'NEILL CITY, HOLT COUNTY—A TRIP UP THE ELKHORN WITH BROTHER WOLF—TURNED OUT INTO THE RIVER—TUMOR REMOVED FROM MRS. WELLS'S BREAST—MOVE TO ALBION, BOONE COUNTY, AND EXPERIENCE THERE.

AT Oakdale we were not entire strangers, as in other places where we had been. Attending a camp-meeting at this place the previous year, we had made the acquaintance of some of the brethren on the charge, and now, finding a good-sized parsonage well located, we settled down, feeling quite at home. The people gathered around us, and made us feel that we were welcome among them. After settling in our new home, I went out in search of the members on the charge. Hearing of a good brother several miles from town, I started for his home, expecting to spend the night with him. It being farther than I had supposed, it was late in the evening when I reached the place. The night was very dark, and the good brother was not at

home. The woman seemed glad to see me, but at the same time appeared ill at ease—I knew not why. Within a few hours after I had retired for the night, however, the cause of her uneasiness was revealed. Perhaps half of the night had gone when the family was called up, and the children were dressed to be sent away. At first I thought they were rising for the morning work, and lay still. Soon I heard them whispering, and all at once the cause of this hurry and bustle flashed on my mind, and I arose and got out of that cabin at short-meter rate. I was hurried to a near neighbor's, and there allowed to sleep the rest of the night. In the morning I learned that there was one more in the family where I had been routed from bed. Unto them a child was born.

Before reaching home, I met with Brother Bennette, a most earnest man and a local preacher of excellent reputation, who proved to be of great service on the charge and a warm friend of the preacher and his family. How pleasant to meet such godly men, to whom you can go for counsel and help in times of need! The Lord bless such local preachers!

At this time Oakdale Circuit embraced Oakdale, Neligh, Bennette Schoolhouse, and the Rouse Schoolhouse. This is as I found the circuit, but before I left it was considerably enlarged. During the winter we had some revival-meetings, and souls were converted and brought into the Church. Though Oakdale is farther west, it is an older charge than the Norfolk or Madison Charge. The parsonage was built some three years before we came, and the Church was well organized and in good running order. Here, as at many other places, most of the Methodists were homesteaders, and were poor in this world's goods, so there was but little wealth within the Church. As the people were poor, we could not expect a rich harvest of good things while among them and depending upon them for the necessities of life. During the entire Conference year we received not more than thirty dollars in cash from the whole charge, and yet we lived tolerably well. Our salary was principally paid in flour, corn, hay, meat, drygoods, and groceries; then what need had we for money? We are not finding fault with the brethren; for they themselves had but

little or no money. Usually, on these new fields, we received about fifty dollars missionary money. But for this missionary appropriation which the frontier preachers received, many of them would have gone hungry or abandoned their work. Few realize the good they are doing when giving to the missionary cause. By these missionary appropriations thousands of new fields are opened which would otherwise lie uncultivated. All the churches that are able to do it should give liberally to the missionary funds; for they were themselves once aided by missionary money, and so enabled to support a minister. The giving money to support preaching in your own community is not a benevolent act; for you receive full value for every dollar expended in this way. Giving to support preaching among others, where we never expect to be benefited thereby, may be called true benevolence; but we never give to a good cause without being benefited ourselves in some way; for "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Though a man does not attend church himself, he ought to give toward its support; for he is indebted to it for what it does for him financially.

While he is receiving financial benefit, his children are being made better by having safeguards thrown around them, guarding them from moral destruction. Where the gospel is preached, all are benefited. When one of our missionaries first went to his field of labor, a native merchant gave him a hundred dollars. The missionary had been there several months, but saw nothing of his benefactor in any of his congregations. Meeting him on the street one day, he said to him: "How is this? When I first came here, you gave me a hundred dollars to preach for you, and you have not been to hear me at all." The native said: "That is all right. I do n't care to hear you; but while you missionaries are here preaching, my property is safer, and to me it is worth a hundred dollars a year to have you here." The heathen soon learn that the gospel is a savings bank wherever preached.

Oakdale was a large circuit on our first coming here, but we soon added to it, making a very large one, many miles around.

During the summer I learned that there were Methodist people up the Elkhorn River as far west as O'Neill City, about forty miles

from Oakdale. By request of the presiding elder, J. B. Maxfield, I went there and found a few Methodist families. Every four weeks I visited and preached to them in one of their private houses. As I could not give them Sunday services, they would come together on Thursday evening, and I met and preached to them in a sod-house, or a dug-out. In this way preaching at O'Neill was continued during the warm season; but I found it too much of a task in cold weather. Sometimes I would go up there a day or two before the appointed time for preaching, and spend the time in calling on the people or in fishing, becoming a fisher of fish as well as a fisher of men. I remember once taking the spear and going down to the river in search of fish. A short distance from the house I saw one lying close to the shore. It was a large, fine pickerel, and I became quite anxious to secure it for dinner. Carefully throwing the spear, I struck it, but it was a very large one, and as I did not strike it in the right place to hold it, the fish flounced, broke loose, and swam away. Seeing my game so deliberately leaving me, I plunged into the river after

it. After following the wounded fish a half mile or more, wading most of the way waist-deep in water, the chase was abandoned, and I returned to the house, fishless. Another time, while on a trip to this place, I stopped on the river bank to feed the horses and eat a cold lunch, when I saw some nice bass playing in the water close by. My fish hook was soon put in order and thrown in, with a hope to capture them. In a very few minutes I landed five of them on the shore, and was on the road toward home.

By request of the presiding elder, Brother J. R. Wolfe and I made a trip to O'Neill City, and north of there to Paddock, on the Niobrara River. On our way we would stop occasionally, call the people together, and preach to them. After preaching to the people at O'Neill City, we went on to Paddock, where we found a family of Christian people, and made an evening appointment for services in their house. At the appointed hour a few of the citizens came in, and I preached to them from these words, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." If I remember correctly, the citizens told us this was the first sermon preached in that

community and the first religious meeting of any kind in the place. After making due inquiry about the country and the religious element in the neighborhood, we turned our faces toward home, inquiring for Methodist people as we found opportunity. On our way home, we had an amusing adventure in crossing the Elkhorn River. There having been a great deal of rainfall, the river was overflowing its banks and running around the bridge. We crossed the bridge at the little town of Neligh all right; but there was a swift current on the other side, between the bridge and the dry land; not so deep, however, but that we thought there would be no trouble in driving through with our team. We were just fairly getting into the current when down went one of the front wheels into a hole, throwing us over the wheel into the water, with our hats, coats, and all our baggage. Picking myself up, I saw our hats moving away with the swift current, and, if not overtaken, they would soon be beyond our reach. So I gave chase, running through the water up to my waist, while Brother Wolfe was fishing the other things out of the river. The day was so warm that we

had been riding with our boots off, and they, too, were in the water. Another thing which added interest to the scene, we were both bald-headed. There we were, waist-deep in the water, barefooted and bareheaded, our hats floating away and I running after them,—all of which made the scene laughable to any one who might be looking on. The hats were finally overtaken and brought back, the other things were rescued, and we were soon home in dry clothes, laughing over our adventure.

During the year we had some success, and made encouraging advancement along the border-line. But there was a great drawback to the work in the shape of a county-seat fight. Some of our members lived in Neligh and some in Oakdale, two towns that were rivals for the county-seat. This county-seat fight grew to such a fever-heat that it not only caused trouble in the Church, but came near separating husband and wife, who took different sides in the strife. How foolish neighbors are to let such trifling things take away their friendship and mar the peace of the entire community! But how much more sinful and foolish for brethren in the

Church to be divided over them! But such is life here below.

While yet on this charge, another affliction came upon us. Shortly after our first child was born, a small, hard substance made its appearance in Mrs. Wells's right breast, and grew to a frightful size. It became evident that it must soon be removed with the knife, or she would be entirely helpless. Whether she could endure a surgical operation and live, we knew not, but at the rate the tumor was growing it was plainly to be seen that it would undermine her health and destroy her life. After careful consideration and due preparation, we went to Norfolk for the purpose of having it removed. And what a dreadful operation it was! In order to perform the operation she was kept under the influence of chloroform for three-quarters of an hour, and much of that time the blood was spurting from her breast at a fearful rate. Though she seemed in much agony while undergoing the operation, the doctors said that I suffered more than she did. Every cut of the knife sent sharp pains throughout my body. In removing the tumor, most of the breast was taken

with it, leaving a frightful wound. After it was removed, the doctors found that it weighed three pounds and three-quarters. They said, if left alone, it would have grown to be of greater weight than her body, and in this way taken her life. From the loss of blood and the effects of chloroform, it seemed for awhile that she could hardly recover. Within twelve or fourteen hours after the operation, however, she began to convalesce, and from that time increased in strength. Within about two weeks she was up and walking about the house, and we rode out to Brother A. M. Cunningham's, several miles away, where we spent a few days, and then returned to our charge.

Once more the Conference year closes, and our pastorate ends at Oakdale. On account of Mrs. Wells's poor health, we did not go to Conference this year. Before the meeting of Conference the presiding elder told me that, if I wished, he would leave us at Oakdale, or, if I preferred, he would send us to Albion, Boone County, where the people had requested that I should be sent to them. I told him to do as he thought best, and I would be pleased. When

returns came from Conference, we saw that we were assigned to the Albion Circuit. I notice, by the Minutes of the Conference of 1877, that I reported, that year, one hundred and fifty-nine dollars on salary and fifty-one members on the entire charge. The reader will here observe how small the amount the preacher received for his labor in the early days of Methodism in Nebraska.

We must not leave without giving a brief sketch of a rain-and-wind storm while at this place. Brothers of mine, on their way home from the gold-mines in the Black Hills, called to spend a few days with us. Rolling their covered wagon close to the house, two or three of them crawled into it to sleep during the night. Some time in the night the wind began to blow, and continued to come harder and harder until it seemed that it would sweep everything away. Soon the rain and hail fell at a most frightful rate, beating against the house, knocking out the windows, and, entering the room, drenched the floor with hail and water. When the wind began to blow the hardest, the boys in the wagon abandoned it, and came into the house.

After the storm was over, we were anxious to see what was damaged. Looking out for the covered wagon, we found it gone. On searching, and finding it nowhere near the house, we went down town in the direction of the storm, and there it was, run up against a blacksmith-shop. It had received but little damage, but in its course had stolen somebody's plow.

Our household goods were again loaded upon a wagon, and we moved to Albion, then a small town in Boone County, surrounded with about the best land in the State of Nebraska. There was no parsonage on the charge, and we could hardly find a house to live in. We finally rented the upper part of the house of Wm. Daniels, the county sheriff, until we could build a parsonage. Here, as elsewhere, we found many warm friends, who spared no pains to make us feel comfortable and at home. Let me say of Albion and the surrounding country that, in all our travels, I never found a more genial and social class of people, where the rich and the poor mingled together as here, and where there was so little trouble among the citizens of the entire community. "Behold, how good

and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

At this time Albion Circuit embraced Albion, Boone, St. Edwards, Moore Schoolhouse, and the Robinson Schoolhouse on the Cedar River, and part of the time I had an appointment north of Albion, making six in all. I think the circuit was as large as any I have ever traveled. The appointments were not so far apart as on other charges I had served, but there were more of them, and the membership was badly scattered over the country. By riding many miles and preaching three times each Sunday, I managed to give each appointment preaching every two weeks. I kept an account of the number of miles traveled this year, going to and from my appointments, and it was somewhere up into the thousands; but, as the account is lost, I am not able to tell just how many thousand.

Our living in the house with the county sheriff gave us some amusing things to remember and laugh at, one of which I must relate: A neighbor's girl was accused of insanity, and was brought to the sheriff's house and kept here until she could have her trial and be sent

to the asylum. Growing much worse after being brought here, she became a raving maniac, and was inclined to fight those who came near her. She was put in a small bedroom by herself, and rested there quietly. As we were helping to care for her, I said to the sheriff, "Now wife and I will go to bed, and if you need us for anything, call, and we will help you." We then went to our room, and were about getting into bed, when we heard the slamming of a door, and in an instant the sheriff, followed by his wife, rushed pellmell up the stairway, calling for a light, and acting as if they thought the poor, afflicted girl was after them to tear them in pieces. It seems the sheriff's wife had gone into the girl's room with a lighted lamp, and as she was turning to leave, the crazy creature, with all her might, slammed the door shut. The quick swinging of the door blew out the light. The woman, supposing that the girl had leaped from her bed, blown out the light, and shut the door, intending to tear her in pieces, was wonderfully frightened, and, with the sheriff, ran up the stairs as for life. Striking a light, we went down again, but could hear nothing

of the girl. All was quiet in her room. The sheriff told his wife to open the door and see what she was doing; but the wife told him it was his business to look after her, and to do it himself, as he was sheriff. The sheriff was so modest that he dared not go into the room, lest she should be out of bed in her night-clothes. Our hired girl volunteered to go into the room, and found the girl quietly lying in her bed, with no signs of having been out of it. All this commotion was caused by the girl's reaching out and slamming to the door.

After living in this house about three months, we built a parsonage, and moved into it. Here we had good quarters and a comfortable house for a frontier preacher, but a poor one for an Eastern man. The lumber for this parsonage was drawn from Columbus, about forty miles distant. Money was scarce, and it was difficult to get carpenters to work on the building, so I turned out and worked on it myself until it was finished, doing about as much hard work as any other man.

During the spring there were a great many thunderstorms at Albion and vicinity that did

considerable damage. Soon after moving into our new parsonage, a storm visited the country, accompanied by a heavy rainfall and tremendous peals of thunder. After a very sharp clap of thunder men were seen hurrying by, as if greatly excited. On inquiry, we learned that the lightning had killed one of our neighbor's girls. As soon as possible, Mrs. Wells and I made our way through the water and mud to the house, only to find the girl dead and the family almost wild with grief. The girl was a stout, rugged young woman. She had just finished a large washing, and lain down on a lounge near the wall to rest when she was struck by the lightning and instantly killed. The family dragged her out of doors into the mud and water, hoping to bring her to life, but in vain; her soul had taken its everlasting flight.

As there was yet good Government land to be had not far away, I concluded it would be a good thing to take a timber claim, and, while building up the Church, I could secure a hundred and sixty acres of land. Selecting a good claim, I went on it, and began improvement by plowing around it with my own team, and hired

some of the brethren to do the necessary breaking-up. While camping on the claim, my horses got frightened, broke loose, and left me one night, a little after dark. A young man who was in camp with me had two good horses, which we mounted and started in pursuit of the runaways. As the night was very dark, we thought it useless to follow them far, and turned back to the camp. Just before reaching our wagons, we saw something coming over the hills toward us that looked like a wild, vicious animal. When we stopped to look at it, it would stop; and when we moved, it would move. Having no weapon with which to defend ourselves, we urged our horses toward the camp, not wishing to come in contact with a vicious animal in the dark. On going in search of my ponies the next morning, I went to the place where we had seen the frightful animal, and carefully examined the ground for signs of the beast, only to learn that it was a bush that had been set in the ground by the surveyor while running out the lines of the land.

The young man, my companion in camp, accompanied me for several miles in hunting for

my ponies, and then turned back, leaving me to foot it alone. Following their trail through the grass for about ten miles, I found them at last at the house of a farmer, who was working one of them at the plow. Getting possession of the ponies, I was not long in reaching camp. The next day I drove home, glad to find a shelter from the rain and cold wind.

Before leaving Albion, I paid the brethren for doing the necessary work on my claim in order to hold it. After a short absence, I wrote them to be sure and do the work in time. They answered that, if they lived, the work would be done. The time passed, and the work was not done; neither were they dead; but we lost our one hundred and sixty acres of land all the same. We lost the money we had paid them, and the claim besides. Perhaps it was for the best that we should not own this land; at least, we are satisfied with what we have, and hope those brethren have long since repented of their neglect, as we have long since forgiven them the debt.

On this circuit, as on all others we had served up to this time, there was no church building.

There were no church-buildings on this work of any denomination. Some of our appointments were in sod-houses, there being only two frame schoolhouses on the charge while we were here; one at Albion and one at St. Edwards. The Congregationalists were on the field, but they had no church-building. A large majority of the people lived in dug-outs and sod-houses. In fact, there were few houses of any other kind in the country outside the little towns. One of our brethren in the Cedar Valley lived in a sod-house, a description of which may be of interest to the reader. The entire building was thirty-six feet in length and twelve feet wide, with but one room. It contained two families, two cook-stoves, two tables, and five beds. The walls were about six feet high, the roof was composed of poles, brush, and dirt, and it had a dirt floor. The two families cooked, ate, and slept in this one room, and many times the preacher and his family were there, and well entertained, making three families, all in one room. Those sod-houses were very comfortable houses to live in, when there was not too much dirt falling down

upon and into things, and when the rain did not prevent the fleas from sleeping out of doors.

At this time, on the Albion Charge, fuel was scarce and the most difficult to get of all the other necessities of life. As there was no coal in the country nearer than Columbus, forty miles away, we depended on wood altogether, and this was drawn from the Cedar bluffs, some nineteen miles away. Notwithstanding this, we never had so great an abundance of wood before, and of so good a quality, as at this place. The brethren made a "bee," and drew up a great pile of good oak-wood, much of which warmed us twice. Of course, this wood was given (?) to us on salary; but it was better than money, for we could not keep warm with money, and money would hardly hire men to draw wood so far in cold weather. This to us was a pleasant and, to some extent, a profitable year, there being a considerable increase of membership on the charge.

Soon after moving into the new parsonage mentioned above, Miss Cunningham, a young lady living with us, was married to a Mr. Smith, of Albion, at which time we had quite a notice-

able experience. Mr. Smith was one of the first settlers in the county, and, being a blacksmith, was well known throughout the country. As there was a general invitation for all to come to the wedding, a multitude attended. In connection with the wedding the brethren announced a donation party for the pastor, which called to the parsonage many more than could find sitting-room in the house. As the upper part of the house was in one room, the wedding took place there, and it was so overburdened with people that the floor began to give way, causing many to leave the room, which saved the floor from falling. In this crowded place the ceremony was performed, though the people were almost breathless because of the trembling floor. Supper was served by passing the plates from one to the other while the guests were standing.

The Conference year is ended, and the family and I start for Beatrice, where the Conference is to meet. Again, with our ponies, we cross the country, and visit our own folks who live near Beatrice. While here I took to shaking with the ague, and failed to reach the seat of Confer-

ence until Sunday, almost the last day of the session.

While at home and shaking with the ague, we were halting between two ways of turning. Our friends at home wanted me to locate, and I thought it would be a good thing to come home at least one year, and improve our land, and so add something to our support while preaching. I finally took a supernumerary relation, and was left without an appointment.

This year I reported \$300 on salary, and a hundred and twelve members on the charge.

Now I felt lost without a charge, and hardly knew what to do with myself on Sunday.

CHAPTER XII

MOVE TO THE FARM—BUILD OUR OWN HOUSE—WORK ON THE FARM—GO TO CONFERENCE—GO HOME WITH A DRUNKEN WOMAN—RETURN TO THE PASTORATE—APPOINTED TO THE SCHUYLER CIRCUIT AND WORK THERE—LOSE ANOTHER CHILD—OVERFLOWING OF THE PLATTE RIVER.

A GOOD team was engaged, and I went after our goods, all the way to my recent charge and back alone. The round trip by wagon-road was fully two hundred miles, and half of this distance with a heavy load. The brethren were wonderfully surprised to learn that I had come after our goods to move them home; for they fully expected me to return and serve them another year. The goods were soon placed in the wagon, and I began my return trip to the farm. After eight days' absence and seven hard days' drive, I reached home, there to remain for at least one year. Storing our goods in a brother's granary and house, I went to work building a house of my own. As I had but little money, the work must be done with my own hands.

Having served an apprenticeship at the car-

penter trade in helping to build parsonages, I was able to do my own work on the house, and it was a pretty good job for a jackknife carpenter. I worked daily early and late that the house might be ready to occupy before cold weather set in. Inside of six weeks it was so nearly completed that we moved into it, and settled down in our own house for the winter. By constant hard labor from the time of beginning to build until moving, I lost about forty pounds of adipose.

Having but little money, we were pinched for the necessities of life during the winter, and, having raised no grain, I picked corn on the shares to get feed for my horses. After worrying through the winter the best we could, we were greatly rejoiced at the approach of spring, when, with all my strength, I began to improve the farm. My two small ponies were too light for breaking prairie alone, so I announced that I would trade my buggy for a horse, thinking that, by putting one large horse with the ponies, it would make a pretty good team. A neighbor of mine, and another man who was a stranger to me, hearing that I had offered my buggy for a

horse, came to my house with an old gray horse which they offered for the buggy, provided I would give them ten dollars to boot, which I refused to do. As the horse was very poor, I hesitated about trading at all. But they said it only needed a little care to put it in good flesh; that it had made a trip on the plains, where it got no grain, which was the cause of its poor appearance. Knowing but little of the man, yet I was foolish enough to think he would not cheat me out of my buggy, and I traded with him. After working the horse one-half day, I found that he was an old, worthless, crippled creature, not worth feeding, and I gave him away that he might be taken from the place.

Here is one case where a neighbor took advantage of my ignorance in regard to horseflesh and of my confidence in him, and cheated me out of about one hundred dollars by lying to me. Up to this time I thought that, as I was a poor preacher, surely my neighbors at least would not take advantage of my confidence in them, and lie me out of so much property. After all, this was a good lesson, though dearly bought; for since then I have looked out for such liars and

cut-throats, and have not allowed them to take me in so easily. I learned at least that I was not a success as a horse-trader.

Another horse was bought, and put with the ponies, and I went to work turning over the sod at a rapid rate. During the summer I broke up about forty acres and put a part of it into sod-corn, doing all the work myself, besides many other little tasks about the farm, and preaching to the people on Sundays.

Working so hard without being used to it, brought on a fit of the ague, which laid me on the shelf for several days; but I was soon out and at labor again. By putting in a very hard year's work, my land was now in shape to be of some financial benefit.

While I was at home on the farm, the Methodists held a camp-meeting on the Little Blue River bottom, a few miles south of the little town of Edgar, to which we went. Having no tent, a header box, that was made for drawing grain from a header to the stack, was fitted up for the occasion. Putting this on a wagon, and stretching a cloth over it for a roof, we moved to the camp-ground. By making a ladder on which to

climb into the temporary house, we had a comfortable place during the meeting. At the close of the meeting, to get ready for moving home we had only to hook the horses to the wagon, and drive away. Though the country was new and the people poor, we had a good and profitable meeting.

Conference time came, we rented our farm for fifty dollars, and prepared for another move. This year Lincoln was the seat of Conference, and, as usual, we drove there with the ponies. Reaching the seat of Conference, we were assigned to a Mr. Cole's for entertainment, and found a very pleasant home during the Conference session.

One ridiculous incident, which took place at this time, I must relate, and that to the shame of the city of Lincoln. One day, while we were at the dinner-table, a woman came to the door and made a complaint about something that had taken place at her home. She was present but a short time when we discovered that she was so much under the influence of liquor as to be crazy, and hardly able to stand alone. After talking a few minutes, she flopped down on the

doorstep and lay there as if dead. The lady of the house tried to persuade her to get up and go home, but could do nothing with her. Seeing that something must be done, I went out and told her to get up and go home; but still she made no movement, at which I told her if she did n't leave, I should call the police and have her taken away. At the threat of calling the police she made an attempt to rise, but could not. By assisting her, she was enabled to rise to her feet, but could not walk alone; so, taking her by the arm, I led her to her home, which was but a short distance away. The reader can have but little idea how mortified I felt leading home a miserable, drunken woman, and passing respectable people, who knew nothing of the circumstances. As soon as she was in her own room in a chair, I left the house about as fast as a preacher ever gets away from any place, meanwhile looking about to see if any one was watching me. Shame on a town, State, or Government that licenses the selling of the vile stuff that ruins the lives and homes of its citizens! I can not see why it is not just as reasonable to license any other kind of murder as that of killing with alcohol.

This year I was appointed to the Schuyler work, in Colfax County, another very large circuit, but of considerable strength. Again we journeyed about one hundred miles, with our goods on a wagon, stopping at night wherever the people would take us in. On reaching our work, we found friends to welcome us to our new field of labor and to their homes. Here let me call the attention of all Methodists who read these lines to the importance of Churches kindly receiving their new pastor when he first reaches his charge. Remember that he is human, and needs your sympathy and kindly greetings. Perhaps you do receive him kindly; but if you show it in no way, how is he to know that he is welcome? In some way let him know it, or he may think to the contrary. By not making his coming among you pleasant at first, you may cripple him in his usefulness among you for all time to come. How many times our hearts have been made to ache by those who ought to have been comforters and supporters, while we were yet strangers on the charge!

At Schuyler we found a good-sized parsonage and a small church-building. This was my

eighth year in the Conference, and my first charge that possessed a Methodist church building. At the Leigh appointment, however, there is another church edifice; so, you see, we are coming up in the world, or rather getting away from the frontier, and entering into Methodist churches. At this time the Schuyler Circuit embraced Schuyler, Leigh, and two other appointments in schoolhouses. The work was large and difficult to manage, with a great deal of travel through the cold and heat.

One Sunday, while going to one of my appointments, I overtook a German who was traveling on the highway, and invited him to ride. Soon after he had taken his seat, I plainly saw that he was under the influence of liquor. Gazing intently at me, he asked if I was a preacher, and, on being answered affirmatively, he said, "Vot beez you? a Catolic?" I said, "No, I am a Methodist minister," to which he responded, "I beez a Metodist too." I could not surely tell whether he was a Methodist or not, but I knew his breath did not smell like one.

Soon after we were thoroughly settled, we engaged in a revival work at Schuyler, where

we had a good meeting, and the Church was considerably strengthened spiritually, numerically, and financially. At this time Schuyler was largely a Bohemian town, and handled more beer and whisky than almost anything else. There being eight saloons and but four churches, it was a hard town to work in, and a very unpleasant place to live in, because of those drunkard-manufacturing shops.

This year I was greatly afflicted with a sore throat, but continued to travel and preach three times a day, thinking but little of it. I had previously injured my throat by hard singing, and it was now beginning to affect and weaken my speaking powers. How easy for a man to injure his usefulness by doing too much!

Another sad and severe affliction came upon us while here, in the sickness and death of another dear babe. Some few months after settling in Schuyler, our child, then about one year old, was taken very sick, and we thought it could live but a few days; but it lingered along for several weeks, when on the fourth day of August, 1880, its little soul left the afflicted body and returned to God who gave it. Again the cloud of afflic-

tion hung heavily over our home; but the Lord blessed us in our afflictions.

The lamb we loved and cherished so,
Its wings it did unfold,
And went to where all children go,
Up to the land of gold.
In Schuyler's Cemetery, there lies
Its little form alone,
Although its soul in Paradise
Doth dwell around the throne.

Now we have two little boys in heaven, awaiting our approach.

Some very pleasant incidents cheered us while we were here, which we shall long remember, and they will be as bright spots in our lives as long as we live. One I must mention. The brethren saw how much I needed books (for as yet I had but few), and made me a present of a work entitled "Universal Knowledge," which was a help to me in my work, and which I esteem more highly than if received in any other manner. Then, there were incidents that were not so pleasant, one of which I will notice. In looking over the charge I heard of certain persons who were holding Church letters from the Methodist Episcopal Church. In company with one

of the class-leaders, I called on those persons and persuaded them to give me their letters. I felt, in accomplishing this, that I had done a good day's work. Telling some of the brethren about it, I noticed that they smiled as much as to say, "Well, you've got an elephant on your hands." In a short time word came to me that I had better look after my new members, for they were drinking, swearing, and fighting. Then I wished they were where I had first found them. Taking the class-leader who had accompanied me when I received the letters, I went to the parties and told them my errand, requesting them to repent, which they refused to do. I then told them they should be brought to trial and expelled, or they might withdraw from the Church. After spending nearly half a day with them, I succeeded in persuading them to withdraw and save further trouble. After obtaining their consent to withdraw, I went home, feeling much better than when I had received their letters. From that time to this I have not been so ready to hunt up old Church letters; and yet I suppose we ought to hunt them up and take them, even

though next day required to expel the persons presenting them.

This year ended, and we were able to report considerable prosperity on the charge. For the first time in my ministry I could take the cars at home and ride in them all the way to the seat of Conference. By this time, however, railroads were getting common, and ministers on the way to Conference came in cars from nearly all parts of the State. It is wonderful how rapidly this country has developed within the last few years, and how people by thousands have moved in and occupied the land, until there is not a vacant piece to be found anywhere in all the wild country I traveled over a few years ago!

This year, 1880, Conference was held at Nebraska City, a beautiful town on the Missouri River. The Minutes of the Conference shows one hundred and ten members for Schuyler Charge, and \$593 on salary. At this Conference, Schuyler was made a station, and I was returned for another year. For the first time I am now a stationed preacher, exempt from riding through the cold as before. So far as traveling is

concerned, it was by far the easiest year of my ministry up to this time. Of course, I had to do more reading and make greater preparation, but I had much more time in which to do it.

This Conference year was one of trial and discouragement to me. My throat became so sore that the doctors told me I would have to abandon the ministry altogether; so I concluded to locate and go home. During the winter season there was a great deal of sickness and a number of deaths, and being called upon to attend so many funeral services, I preached more frequently than usual. The winter was very stormy and exceedingly cold, with a heavy snow on the ground nearly all the season, and the winds, blowing much of the time from the north, added to the unpleasantness. During the most severe storms of winter I was called upon to attend funerals far out in the country, and this was wearing on my constitution and injurious to my throat. Informing my presiding elder of my intention to locate, he persuaded me to try it another year; so when Conference convened, I reported for duty. This year \$346 was reported on salary and forty-nine members in full connec-

tion. Here was a station with only forty-nine members, and yet they kept the preacher from starving, and even from going hungry.

While at this place I was blessed with a goodly number of wedding fees; but there was one which turned out even worse than the one previously mentioned, which I must not pass unnoticed. The bride's father came to the parsonage, and requested me to come to his house in the evening and perform the ceremony. At the appointed hour I reported for duty. After considerable delay, the couple came upon the floor, and were joined together as husband and wife. After the ceremony the company was treated to cake, etc., and we had a good social time. When the time came to go home, I was kindly waited upon, and took my leave, but without a fee. Thinking that the young man had forgotten it, I gave it but little attention, supposing he would hand it to me at some other time. But I am still waiting; for the young man has not yet so much as made mention of it to me.

There is something very peculiar about the two weddings where I received no fee. The first couple lived together but a short time, and sepa-

rated. Not long after the second couple were married they were separated by the husband's being sent to the penitentiary for stealing. I have married a great many couples; but these are the only two that failed to give a fee, and, with two exceptions, the only ones, as far as I know, who have turned out badly in their married relation. "A man's sin will find him out." Let the young men who read these lines take warning.

The town of Schuyler is situated in the great Platte Valley, and at times is completely surrounded with water and entirely cut off from all communication with the surrounding country. In our second spring at the place there was a great deal of rain and melting of the snow, which caused the Platte to overflow its banks and do much damage to the farming community and not a little to the town.

One evening, when the snow was fast melting and filling the creeks and ravines with water, we received word from Columbus—a town above on the river—warning us to look out for the flood, as it was coming. When the news reached our town, there was a great hustling among the farmers to secure their families and stock.

The people in town were wonderfully excited, and many of them left their homes for places of safety on higher ground and in larger buildings, which for them was a wise move; for during that night the flood came. As there was a great deal of ice in the river, the oncoming tide could be heard for miles. While yet more than two miles away, we could hear the rumbling waters and grinding ice, that made a frightful roaring as it came. Then, to add to the terror of the mighty roaring, the farmers were yelling at their cattle while driving them into a safe place. The cattle were bellowing as if wonderfully frightened, the sheep were bleating, hogs squealing, and dogs howling and barking, adding so greatly to the confusion and uproar, that for awhile it seemed as if the town people, appalled with fear, would take flight to the high prairie. In the midst of the confusion, I made preparation for cutting a way for my family through the roof, if need be, and then retired and slept until morning, supposing that, if necessary, we would be awakened in time to make our escape. On awaking the next morning, we learned that the water had advanced into the town, and run down through the main

street, and that it came within one block of the parsonage.

Though it flowed in different places through the town, there was little damage done, only a few small houses having been turned around by the large pieces of ice which struck them as they passed. But there were thousands of dollars lost through the flood among the farmers. Some farms were almost entirely washed away, or covered with sand so deep as to ruin them altogether. By morning the water had fallen considerably, and some of the farmers returned to their homes. One man, who lived close to the river, but on a little ridge higher than the land around him, took his family home and came to town to work, leaving them alone. In a day or two, in the evening, the waters overflowed the valley from bluff to bluff, and again surrounded this family. The stream was full of ice, and it was impossible to send a boat to rescue them. There was the mother, with her little children, on a narrow strip of land, the water extending more than a mile on either side of her little house, almost touching the building, and one piece of ice did slightly strike against it. Her husband

was almost wild as he looked across the waters at the lamp in his own window, expecting every moment to see the light extinguished and his wife and children swept away by the flood. As long as her light could be seen, it was known that she was safe. At the dawning of morning her house could still be seen, and, as the waters were going down, we knew there was no further danger. One family left the house with a barrel of lime in it, which, when the water entered, in slacking, took fire, and consumed the building and all its contents, leaving the family without a home.

Conference ended, and I was returned to the Albion Charge, which I had left three years before—just three years to a day from the time I left it until I returned to take charge of the work again.

Before laying aside my pen, and bidding adieu to my readers, I must give a little sketch of our experience in a storm while spending the second year on the farm. After serving Albion the second time, we spent another year at home.

In the year 1883, we planted wheat, barley,

and corn, and they were growing nicely, giving promise of an early and abundant harvest. It seemed that better prospects for crops were never seen than we had at that time, and it continued so until the seventeenth of June, when everything in the shape of grain was swept away. In the morning I went around the field of growing grain with my brother, and he remarked that he had never seen such a heavy crop of small grain. In the evening a dark cloud appeared in the southwest, and seemed to be coming rapidly toward our place. Our children were nearly three miles from the farm at school, and it was about time for them to be on their way home. The clouds continued to look so angry and threatening that it was thought best to take a horse and buggy and go after them. Hastily a horse was hitched to a light rig, and I went forward and met them about half way home, much frightened by the coming storm. Taking them into the buggy, I turned the horse about in the direction of home. Seeing that the storm was fast approaching and roaring tremendously, I put the horse to his utmost speed, determined, if possible, to reach home before the storm over-

took us, and succeeded. Just as the children were entering the house and I the barn with the horses, the storm struck, and the hail began to fall and bound as high as a man's head, continuing to come thicker and faster until the air was full of hailstones, many of them more than seven inches in circumference. The wind blew harder and harder, and one of the mightiest wind and hail storms that it was ever my lot to witness was upon us, beating everything to pieces. The wind blew a hurricane, and the hail fell astonishingly large and fast, coming with such force that the windows on the side next to the storm were broken to pieces. When the windows were broken out in the upper part of the house, the wind swept in and took off the east side of the roof, and the water and hail poured in upon the floor, flooding everything in the house. The water came in at the windows and doors that were blown open, until it was ankle-deep on the floor. There were hail, water, glass, and plaster, all mingled together; an unpleasant picture to behold.

While the storm was raging, and at its worst, I was in a straw-barn with the horses. During

the hardest puffs and whirlings of the wind, it seemed, every moment, that stable, horses, and I would all go up together, and be carried away in the storm. On going to the house when the storm was nearly over, I found the roof gone, and the folks in the pantry did not even know that it had been blown away. Half of the roof was lifted and hurled to the ground, smashed into hundreds of pieces, and some of the fragments were carried more than a mile from the place. The wind was so terrific that it carried hogs, plows, and many other things, into the cornfield. There was a new storm-door on the west side of the house next to the storm, which was broken by the hail. It was a common paneled door, and three of the panels were broken and two of them knocked out. The doors were not only broken, but the shingles and siding on the side of the house toward the storm were literally beaten to pieces, and there was hardly a whole shingle or piece of siding to be found on that side of the house. The house was so battered, indeed, that it had the appearance of being fired into with grapeshot.

Some two hours after the storm we meas-

ured a hailstone seven inches and a half in circumference, and it was thought that there were many, which, if measured at first, would have attained fully nine inches. Previous to this, if any one had told me of the possibility of such a tremendous hailstorm, I would hardly have believed him; now I am prepared to believe almost anything in regard to storms.

In the morning before the disaster the corn-fields were beautiful and green, and the small grain was headed out; but in the evening there was not a sign that corn had ever been on the ground. The neighbors told me that it would soon spring up from the roots, and flourish again. Sure enough, in a few days the corn was out and covering the field as before. The next fall there was a wonderfully heavy crop of corn; but the storm had put it back so far that it hardly ripened. I sold mine to a cattle-feeder for a fair price, and had good returns from the hail-smitten corn, after all. The day after the storm the neighbors came and reroofed our house, and we were soon as comfortable as ever, and went on with our work.

This ends my frontier work, but not my

labors in the ministry. I have now been in the good work a little over thirty years, and am still at it. But my health and strength will not permit me to do full pastoral work as in former years, and I am doing it on a small scale.

In those long, weary years of toil, I have seen the sunshine as well as the cloud. I have learned by experience that the darkest clouds have the brightest lining. In looking over the past I find more comfort in calling to mind the places where I have laid the foundation for my beloved Zion than in thinking of any other places I have served. Though I have endured hardships and deprivation in laboring on the outposts, they have brought me a richer reward than all other fields on which I have labored.

What a change has come over the country since 1862, when I first made my home in the then Far West! Then there were thousands of acres of unoccupied land stretching into the far distance, to be had merely for the settling upon and cultivating of them. A large part of Nebraska was then wild and uninhabited by white men. The Red Man was lord of the plains. In the valleys and on the banks of the creeks and

rivers were then seen the canvas villages of the savage. The Indian hunter chased the buffalo, antelope, elk, and other game. The painted warrior with his shield, tomahawk, and scalping-knife, rode his foaming steed, hurrying on to bloodshed and death, giving the war-cry as he rattled on in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. The wooing song of the Indian maiden rang through the woods and across the plains, charming and captivating her lover. That song, though admired by her people, to the ear of one used to music resembled the cry of distress rather than the strains of love. The yells and cries of the papoose, while playing hide-and-seek in the brush, reached the ear of the lonely traveler crossing the prairie—a babbling sound, more resembling the howling of wolves than the playful cries of children. Buffaloes by the thousands subsisted, summer and winter, on the buffalo-grass, and much of the time were fat enough for beef. The elk, deer, antelope, and wolf were among the inhabitants of this country.

How is it now? The sod-house and dug-out have given way to the beautiful frame residence. The dug-out and sod schoolhouses have been

supplanted by good school-buildings all over the country. Instead of sod churches and underground meeting-houses, we now have large, capacious church-buildings. Instead of the piercing war-cry of the Red Man, the "hurrah" for our thriving America comes from a thousand throats all over this vast domain. The Red Man's pony has yielded to the plow-horse and the roadster that is driven by thousands of cultured wives and daughters of white men. The buffalo is crowded out by the domestic ox. The deer and antelope are replaced by sheep and hogs. Though the songs of the young women of the wild West are no more heard on the prairie, the songs of our own native girls swell upon the breeze, and are far more charming, as in our churches they sing "Nearer, my God, to thee," or "Sweet by and by," than all the songs of the daughters of the plains. In place of the dirty, half-naked children of the desert, playing and growing up in ignorance, our own children are making the school-grounds ring with their merry laughter, while both mind and body are being trained for usefulness. No one, who has not seen the past and

present condition of this country, can fully realize the changes that have taken place.

Now, if the reader will kindly pass by the imperfections he may find while reading this my simple story, and gather the good he may chance to notice, I shall be gratified, and think that at least some good has been accomplished.

Well, as I am only to write of a Frontier Life, I will close, for I have now tarried so long in one place that civilization has overtaken and gone far beyond me. Therefore, I must say, Good-bye.

